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Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat

I. Introduction

1. In adopting its resolution 2253 (2015), the Security Council expressed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh)[1] and associated individuals and groups, and emphasized the importance of cutting off its access to funds and preventing it from planning and facilitating attacks. In paragraph 97, the Council requested that I provide an initial strategic-level report on the threat, followed by updates every four months.

2. The present report is the fifth such report (see S/2016/92, S/2016/501, S/2016/830 and S/2017/97) and was prepared by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and in close collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and other United Nations entities and international organizations.

3. Security Council resolution 2253 (2015), adopted at a Council meeting held at the level of ministers of finance, reinforced the existing international counter-financing of terrorism framework by calling on Member States to move vigorously and decisively to cut off the flow of funds and other financial assets and economic resources to ISIL. The present report focuses on current sources of terrorism financing and the evolution in financing methods; the measures put in place by Member States to deny funds to ISIL and its affiliates and disrupt terrorist networks; and the efforts of the United Nations and its partners to strengthen States' capacities in that regard. The report also addresses measures and initiatives — including prosecution and rehabilitation strategies — developed to address the threat posed by

[1] Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).

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foreign terrorist fighters (see Council resolution 2178 (2014)) who return from conflict zones, whether to their respective States of origin or to other States.

II. Development of the threat since January 2016 (S/2016/92)

A. Core of ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic

4. Since January 2016, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has remained under continuous military pressure and experienced several setbacks in the Syrian Arab Republic and in Iraq. The group continues to resist, however, in particular in Mosul, Iraq, and currently retains its hold over Raqqah, Syrian Arab Republic. Owing to the complicated military situation, the group reorganized its military structure, diverting decision-making responsibility downwards to local commanders (see S/2017/35, para. 16). In a further reaction to its setbacks in the conflict zone, the group continues to enable and inspire a range of attacks outside the conflict zone. The death of Abou Mohamed al Adnani (QDi.325) and the loss of the city of Manbij, Syrian Arab Republic, which served as the group's headquarters for propaganda and external attack planning, forced the group to reorganize (see S/2017/35, para. 18). ISIL has used improvised explosive devices since its inception; however, despite the sustained military pressure, the group was able to develop capacities to assemble such devices on an industrial scale and to use significant numbers of commercially available drones in a variety of ways: for propaganda, reconnaissance, to direct indirect fire and for aerial attacks.[2]

5. The number of ISIL fighters has significantly decreased in the past 16 months to between 12,000 and 20,000 (see S/2017/35, para. 14). In parallel, the flow of foreign terrorist fighters from many regions to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has slowed. However, returnees and the relocation of fighters from the conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable threat to international security (see S/2017/35, para. 3).

6. The threat from ISIL has been exacerbated by its sophisticated use of the Internet and social media to disseminate online messages to a wide international audience. Since 2014, ISIL has used its online publications to reach potential foreign terrorist fighters and social media to directly engage individuals, encouraging them to join its ranks. It has also targeted specific skill-sets and tailored its message to different linguistic groups using foreign terrorist fighters primarily based in Syria and Iraq to reach out to individuals in their countries of origin in their own language. Once engaged in dialogue, ISIL recruiters and enablers quickly shifted their communications onto a wide range of encrypted applications, complicating efforts in home countries to monitor and investigate such contacts.[3] In the past 16 months, the volume of propaganda has declined, while the earlier overarching message intended to convey an impression of "State building" has shifted towards seeking to demonstrate successes in its military engagements (see S/2017/35, para. 17). Despite this decline in output, much of the propaganda will persist as supporters outside the conflict zones collect and redistribute it.

[2] Information provided by a Member State. The Monitoring Team had already warned of the use of drones by ISIL in 2014 (see S/2014/815, para. 49).

[3] Information provided by a Member State.

B. ISIL finances

7. ISIL is at a pivotal moment in terms of its finances. The group has suffered a reversal of fortune since my first report (S/2016/92). Although its financial situation has steadily declined over the past 16 months, ISIL continues to rely chiefly on the same two revenue streams, hydrocarbons and extortion/taxation, which it has depended on since its declaration of the so-called "Caliphate". ISIL still manages income of tens of millions of dollars per month.[4]

8. Given this reliance on territorially derived sources of income, as ISIL continues to lose territory, and in particular population centres, its sources of income will continue to decline. To date, ISIL does not appear to have developed new sources of income that could compensate for the continuing loss of its two main revenue streams. However, it does not necessarily need to offset the large losses; for as ISIL loses population centres and its forces continue to dwindle, it will also have substantially fewer costs. Thus ISIL may be able to stretch further any funds that it retains or obtains going forward.

9. In my first report, I indicated that ISIL had made as much as $500 million from oil and oil products in 2015 (see S/2016/92, para. 17). At the time of my previous report, according to an estimate by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, that income had decreased by approximately 50 per cent (see S/2017/97, para. 6), in large part owing to military operations targeting oil-related infrastructure. ISIL has tried to offset the decrease in hydrocarbon revenues by increasing the "tax" burden upon the population still under its control (see S/2016/629, para. 14), and this effort continues.[5] However, there is a limit on how much ISIL can squeeze out of a war economy, and, over the course of my previous reports, I have highlighted the effects of the continued financial decline of ISIL, such as significant reductions and delays in fighters' salaries, internal corruption and theft, and a decrease in the already minimal services that ISIL was providing (see S/2016/501, para. 9, S/2016/830, paras. 4-5, and S/2017/97, paras. 5-6). ISIL has continued to face cash shortages and has been using its remaining funds to buy weapons.[6] Furthermore, some ISIL fighters have had to secure "side" jobs given the decrease in, delay, or lack of a salary.[7]

10. In addition to the aforementioned resources, ISIL has drawn income from antiquities smuggling,[8] agricultural products, sale of electricity, exploitation of mineral resources such as phosphates and sulfuric acid, external donations, kidnapping for ransom and human trafficking (see S/2017/35 footnote 16).[9]

11. Furthermore, my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict has carefully documented instances of the selling, gifting and trading of women and children among fighters, which has served as an important recruitment strategy (see S/2016/1090).

12. Despite the financial setbacks to the core of ISIL, according to several Member States ISIL has continued funding its affiliates, many of which have few

[4] Information provided by a Member State.
[5] Information provided by a Member State.
[6] Information provided by a Member State.
[7] Information provided by a Member State.
[8] The Monitoring Team continues to receive reports from Member States and international organizations concerning seizures and criminal investigations of the trade in antiquities illegally removed from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic (see S/2017/35, para. 67).
[9] For example, ISIL has been able to derive income from its symbiotic relationships with criminal organizations and human traffickers and smugglers in Libya, whereby the criminals pay ISIL for safe passage (information provided by a Member State).

internal sources of income and are therefore dependent on the core. However, increasingly the core has started urging its affiliates to be more self-sufficient and proactive in developing internal revenue streams.[10]

13. Given these developments, the focus of the international community will need to turn to countering the financing of "ISIL 2.0". It is expected that ISIL will continue to use extortion and criminal activity as a funding tactic even if it no longer controls territory, as that has been its modus operandi in its prior iterations as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).[11] Member States have indicated that ISIL is likely to depend more on kidnapping for ransom, especially as journalists and aid workers return to liberated regions. ISIL may increase its reliance on external donations to secure further funding.[12] Perhaps, more importantly, according to Member States, ISIL has planned for the "day after" with investments, within the conflict zone as well as the wider region, which can serve as a source of funding as other resources dry up. Yet another Member State has reported that ISIL has transferred funds to areas where no affiliates are present and assessed that this is part of an organized plan for the future.

14. Money services businesses, including exchange houses, continue to be a preferred method for ISIL and its supporters to move funds across borders.[13] Exchange houses in Iraq and in the Syrian Arab Republic have been used on behalf of ISIL,[14] but the problem transcends these two countries, as recent arrests in the wider region demonstrate.[15] Money couriers are also a key method for ISIL to move funds; and a transfer of funds will in certain cases involve both professional couriers and money service businesses at different junctures.[16]

15. The access of foreign terrorist fighters to their home bank accounts, even after they have travelled to the conflict zone, remains a problem, with fighters or facilitators withdrawing funds using automatic teller machines near the conflict zone and providing them to ISIL (see S/2017/35, paras. 11-12; S/2017/97, para. 8). Although the use of bitcoin by ISIL operatives is not yet widespread, a few cases of ISIL supporters using this payment system have been reported.[17]

16. Finally, as I mentioned previously (see S/2016/501, para. 9), liquidity within the conflict zones has been restricted by Member State action and because the "war economy" has its limits. As Member States consider efforts to counter the financing of "ISIL 2.0", a key concern is how to allow reconstruction and stabilization funds to flow into liberated areas, including by reconnecting international financial structures, without also enabling ISIL remnants to abuse these structures and exploit this new liquidity, including through extortion and the formation of front companies.

III. Evolving global threat posed by ISIL

17. Since declaring its intent to attack the United States of America and Europe in September 2014,[18] ISIL has conducted a wide range of attacks, using a variety of

[10] Information provided by a Member State.
[11] Information provided by a Member State.
[12] Currently, however, a consensus does not exist among Member States as to whether external donations will play a significant part in the future income of ISIL.
[13] Information provided by a Member State.
[14] Information provided by a Member State.
[15] Information provided by a Member State.
[16] Information provided by a Member State.
[17] Information provided by a Member State.
[18] Video message by Adnani, see for example: Imran Khan, "ISIL's war just went global", Aljazeera, 5 November 2014.

methodologies depending on the ability of ISIL to project a threat directly from the conflict zones. In November 2015 and March 2016 the complex multi-target attacks conducted in Paris and Brussels were directed and facilitated by personnel specifically sent to Europe from the core of ISIL. Since that time, efforts of European Member States and Turkey aiming at inhibiting travel of foreign terrorist fighters to the conflict zones (see S/2017/35, para. 8) have made it increasingly difficult for ISIL to mount directed attacks.

18. Nonetheless, ISIL has used its propaganda and communication to encourage ISIL supporters in Europe to mount attacks in their countries of residence, highlighting successful methodologies and designs for improvised explosive devices. This has led to multiple attacks, including in Belgium, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some were carried out by returnees, while others were conducted by individuals who had not travelled to the conflict zones.

19. These attacks have generally been unsophisticated in nature, nevertheless causing multiple casualties, such as in Nice, Berlin, London, Stockholm, Saint Petersburg and the latest attack in Manchester, for which the group publicly claimed responsibility in a communiqué distributed via social media on 23 May 2017. Often these attacks have initially been reported as conducted by inspired "lone actors". However subsequent investigations demonstrate that the perpetrators often received support or resources from facilitators (see S/2017/35, para. 7) and, in a number of cases, were in direct contact with ISIL enablers online using encrypted applications before and even during the attacks.[19] Law enforcement agencies of most European countries have also detected and disrupted attack plots, including in countries not previously regarded as among ISIL priority targets.[20] While a number of European Member States have reported that they expect only small numbers of those remaining in the conflict zones to return to their countries of origin (see S/2071/35, para. 10), those who do return would be hardened fighters and represent a significant threat.

20. North Africa has seen resilience by ISIL affiliated groups, who pose a serious threat. Member State assesses that the presence of ISIL in the region is also intended to secure a perpetuation of ISIL as a reaction to the continuous pressure in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. While ISIL in Libya has been weakened after losing a significant portion of the territory it controlled, its threat persists in Libya and in neighbouring countries. As indicated in the Monitoring Team's nineteenth report, acts such as the suicide attack in Benghazi on 18 December 2016, which resulted in the death of several soldiers, show that the group maintains operational capabilities (see S/2017/35, para. 36). Member States reported that the leadership of ISIL within Libya has relocated to the south and south-west of the country. ISIL fighters have also been dispersed in different parts of the country and throughout the region, thus disseminating the threat. According to a Member State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi[21] instructed supporters and sympathizers to travel to Libya instead of the Syrian Arab Republic or Iraq.

21. In Algeria, the ISIL affiliate Jund Al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A) (QDe.151), has been under continuous pressure from security forces in several regions of the country.[22] Since its proclamation in 2014, by a splinter faction of the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (QDe.014), JAK-A has claimed

[19] Information provided by a Member State.

[20] Information provided by a Member State.

[21] Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).

[22] Lamina Chikhi, "Algeria clears Islamic State-tied militants east of capital: sources", Reuters, 24 August 2016.

responsibility for several attacks. One Member State reported coordination and direct communication between JAK-A and ISIL leadership in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

22. In West Africa, the expansion of ISIL is currently challenged by established Al-Qaida affiliates. Currently, the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (QDe.014), Ansar Eddine (QDe.135) and Al Mourabitoun (QDe.141) remain the stronger forces in the region, in particular since their claim of the recent merger under the new banner of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. Nevertheless, a splinter group of Al Mourabitoun, the "Islamic State in the Greater Sahara", under the leadership of Adnan Abu al-Walid al-Sahrawi, was recognized by the core of ISIL in the fall of 2016.[23] This splinter group has since committed several attacks. In particular, it claimed two attacks in Burkina Faso, against a customs office in Markoye in September and security forces in Intangom on 12 October 2016 (see S/2017/35, para. 43). The group has also been reported to be responsible for recent attacks in the Niger.[24]

23. In Nigeria, a faction of Boko Haram (QDe.138) pledged allegiance to Al Baghdadi and proclaimed the "Islamic State West Africa Province".[25] This faction claimed several suicide attacks in Nigeria and has been involved in deadly clashes with security forces since 2015. On April 29, 2017, a communiqué announced that it had killed 15 soldiers in northeast Nigeria.[26] Member States reported an increase in trafficking, in particular weapons and related material, as well as increased capacity of ISIL to recruit in the region. Member States also highlighted that the group is able to attract West African returnees from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. One Member State reported that members of the Al Mourabitoun splinter group, loyal to ISIL travelled to Libya and coordinated with ISIL in Sirte before returning to Mali.

24. Emerging ISIL affiliates operating in Puntland and parts of Southern Somalia complicate the terrorist threat posed by Al-Qaida's affiliate, Al-Shabaab (SOe.001) in East Africa. Member States highlighted that, although these ISIL affiliates have their bases within the territory of Somalia, their threat transcends into the neighbouring States where they seek to recruit, establish bases and conduct attacks.

25. In 2015, when ISIL established its presence in Somalia, it faced resistance from Al-Shabaab. This led to the execution of more than 30 ISIL sympathizers and leaders (see S/2017/35, para. 49). As a result, ISIL members began operating in covert cells to avoid detection. However, measures put in place by Member States helped to disrupt their movement by dismantling an ISIL network of facilitators and recruiters.[27] These efforts contributed to the slow growth and even reduction of ISIL members in Somalia. By the end of 2016, ISIL outreach had become more public and aggressive as its operatives had begun to express their opinions openly.[28] On 8 February 2017 ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack on a hotel in Boosaaso,[29] the economic hub of Puntland.

26. According to several Member States, ISIL plans to enhance its presence in Somalia by taking over the existing Al-Shabaab networks and attracting more

[23] Information provided by a Member State.
[24] Information provided by a Member State.
[25] Information provided by a Member State.
[26] "Breaking: killing 15 apostates from the Nigerian Army in clashes in the Yobe area", Communiqué issued by "Islamic State West Africa Province" on Telegram, 29 April 2017.
[27] Information provided by a Member State.
[28] Information provided by a Member State.
[29] "Somalia: ISIL claims responsibility for attack on Village Hotel in Bosaso", Garowe Online, 8 February 2017.

fighters, including those unable to travel to conflict zones and those relocating from the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Libya. ISIL in Somalia is reliant on external funding, mainly from supporters outside Somalia and the ISIL affiliate in Yemen.[30]

27. After ISIL failed to build on its early success in Yemen, operating with fewer than 500 fighters from different regions (see S/2017/35, para. 32), ISIL in Yemen continues to conduct deadly, extensive, multi-pronged attacks targeting government forces and Houthis.[31] However, the group is still at risk of splitting into subgroups, in particular as it continues to lack tribal support to provide a safe-haven among the Yemeni community.[32] Funds provided by the core of ISIL have continued to reach ISIL in Yemen.[33] ISIL is also attempting to expand through individual cells in the wider Arabian Peninsula and has conducted a range of attacks.[34] Nevertheless, the core called on its sympathizers in the region to remain in their countries to carry out terrorist attacks there.[35]

28. During 2016, ISIL in Afghanistan tried to establish itself in a number of areas. However, as a fighting force they have been severely downgraded by Afghan and international military operations in close cooperation with international air support.[36] Currently, the group has a significant presence only in three districts of Nangarhar Province along the border with Pakistan. Estimates of ISIL strength in Afghanistan vary, with interlocutors indicating 2,000 and 4,000 fighters, although this figure is reported to have reduced as a result of recent operations by Afghan and international forces. ISIL in Afghanistan continues to be well equipped and funded, with some of this funding provided by the core of ISIL.[37]

29. In recent months, the core of ISIL has instructed the group to push towards the north of Afghanistan, yet despite their recruitment efforts in the north over the past three years, the group has not managed to establish a viable fighting force.[38] Nonetheless these efforts are a concern for countries neighbouring Afghanistan to the north. According to Member States, the attacks of ISIL in Afghanistan in neighbouring Pakistan seem in some instances to be "outsourced" to other groups, including Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ) (QDe.096), who initially claimed responsibility for the October 2016 attack on the police training college in Quetta and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (QDe.132) splinter group, which conducted an attack on the Lal Shahbaz Qalandar Sufi shrine in southern Pakistan on 16 February 2017. Both attacks were subsequently claimed by ISIL.

30. The threat level has intensified in South-East Asia, with ISIL increasingly directing its attention, including its propaganda, at the region (see S/2017/35, para. 59). With the rise of ISIL, groups in the region have been revitalized, new groups have proliferated, established groups have splintered and pre-existing groups have rebranded themselves as ISIL affiliates.[39] The attack in Jakarta on 14 January 2016 was a turning point in the region as it was perpetrated by Jamaah Ansharut Daulah militants financed by an Indonesian fighting with ISIL in Syria.[40] While

[30] Information provided by a Member State.
[31] Information provided by a Member State.
[32] Information provided by a Member State.
[33] Information provided by a Member State.
[34] Information provided by a Member State.
[35] Information provided by a Member State.
[36] Information provided by a Member State.
[37] Information provided by a Member State.
[38] Information provided by a Member State.
[39] Information provided by a Member State.
[40] Information provided by a Member State. JAD is an umbrella group comprised of ISIL followers in Indonesia.

security forces were able to foil numerous attacks, more ISIL-related attacks followed in the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia (see S/2017/35, para. 60).

31. A long-standing leader of the Abu Sayyaf Group (QDe.001), Isnilon Totoni Hapilon (QDi.204),[41] has been anointed the ISIL "emir" in the Philippines (see S/2017/35 para. 59). Southern Philippines is at risk of becoming a hub for foreign terrorist fighters from the region and from further afield.[42] In Indonesia, the death of Abu Wardah, also known as Santoso, in 2016 has diminished the threat from Mujahidin Indonesian Timur (QDe.150), but the overall threat in Indonesia persists, in particular from ISIL sympathizers and groups such as JAD, led by imprisoned extremist cleric Aman Abdurrahman, as well from the hundreds of former Jemaah Islamiyah (QDe.092) cadres that have been, or are due to be, released from prison (see S/2017/35, para. 60; S/2016/629, para. 50; S/2016/830, para. 22).

32. Further complicating the threat picture in the region are foreign terrorist fighters from South-East Asia based in the Syrian Arab Republic or Iraq who are funding and enabling attacks in their home countries. Returnees to the region are a significant concern to Member States, as they could increase the military capabilities of local networks. Relocators from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, foreign terrorist fighters who are not nationals of South-East Asian States, are another source of concern, as they are likely unknown to the local authorities (see S/2017/35, paras. 60, 62-63).

IV. Updates on responses to the evolving threat

33. The United Nations, Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations continue to strengthen existing and develop new tools to address the rapidly evolving threat posed by ISIL, including the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters. Over recent months, the Security Council has adopted resolutions on protecting critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks (S/RES/2341 (2017)); the destruction, looting and smuggling of cultural heritage sites and artefacts, as well as their illicit trade and trafficking carried out by terrorist groups or in a context of armed conflict (S/RES/2347 (2017)); and the terrorist threat in the Lake Chad Basin region (S/RES/2349 (2017)). In its resolution 2341 (2017), the Council called on States to consider developing or further improving their strategies for reducing risks to critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks. In its resolution 2347 (2017), the Council requests States to take appropriate steps to prevent and counter the illicit trade and trafficking in cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance originating from a context of armed conflict, notably from terrorist groups, including by prohibiting cross-border trade in such illicit items. In its resolution 2349 (2017), the Council calls for the implementation of a range of measures aimed at strengthening security, protection, and human rights in the Lake Chad Basin, including addressing the conditions that can be conducive to terrorism; ensuring that the perpetrators of acts of violence are held accountable and brought to justice; and developing and implementing disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

[41] Information provided by a Member State.
[42] Information provided by a Member State.

A. Terrorism financing: the impact of resolution 2253 (2015)

1. Criminalization of terrorism financing

34. In my second report pursuant to Security Council resolution 2253 (2015) (S/2016/501), I noted that States were making substantial progress in implementing the counter-financing of terrorism requirements of the relevant Council resolutions, but continued to face challenges in that regard. It should be recalled that Council resolution 2253 (2015) broadens the scope of the offence of the financing of terrorism. Accordingly, in October 2016, the Financial Action Task Force revised the interpretive note to its recommendation on the criminalization of terrorism financing to include financing the travel of foreign terrorist fighters. The Financial Action Task Force also revised the related glossary in order to include language that clearly referred to "funds and other assets", as well to the concept of economic resources (e.g., oil and related materials) in accordance with resolutions 2161 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). According to information gathered by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate from a number of Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies since December 2015, 20 States in Europe and the Caucasus have taken steps to introduce legal measures specifically aimed at reinforcing their respective counter-financing of terrorism systems. Four States in Central Asia have enacted laws to strengthen laws and regulations governing the proceeds of terrorism financing. More than half the States in West Africa — including four States of the West Africa Monetary Union — have revised their terrorism-financing legislation, but only one has criminalized the financing of foreign terrorist fighter travel and another has incorporated a related provision into its counter-terrorism legislation. Four States in the Caribbean, three States in Eastern and Southern Africa and three States in the Middle East and North Africa region have enacted additional terrorism-financing legislation.

35. The efforts of the Council, the Financial Action Task Force and the Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies to promote the implementation of its provisions have helped strengthen the counter-financing of terrorism frameworks. Since December 2015, the International Monetary Fund has provided assistance on counter-financing of terrorism to 37 States, 13 of which are in the Middle East and North Africa region including a Middle East and North Africa counter-financing of terrorism-focused project. The World Bank initiated in April 2017 an anti-money-laundering/counter-financing of terrorism training programme for a number of States in the Middle East and Eastern Africa regions, which aims inter alia to strengthen the capacity to investigate and successfully prosecute financing of terrorism offences, enhance regional cooperation in counter-financing of terrorism and train trainers. In 2016, within the framework of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a capacity-building initiative for West African States, in particularly States of the Sahel, to detect terrorism financing and to collect and manage financial intelligence for the purposes of investigation and prosecution. However, legislation is of limited value if it is not effectively implemented. Globally, few terrorism-financing cases are brought to Court. In many instances, individuals and entities are prosecuted for other charges, including public provocation to commit a terrorist act.

2. Measures to freeze the assets of those supporting terrorist organizations or individual terrorists

36. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2253 (2015) on the listing of any individual or entity associated with ISIL, 11 associated individuals have been listed, and among them 8 are listed as financiers/financial facilitators. In its nineteenth report (S/2017/35), the Monitoring Team recommended further efforts to

encourage States to propose listings targeting financial institutions knowingly conducting transactions on behalf of ISIL. According to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, a large number of States have upgraded their national mechanisms to address the asset-freezing requirements of the relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 1373 (2001). For instance, six States in the Middle East and North Africa region have introduced revised asset-freezing requirements.

37. In some regions, including West Africa, States continue to suffer from weaknesses in their legislative and operational frameworks for the implementation of resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001). Assistance providers have introduced initiatives aimed to encourage designation and cooperation among States in this regard. In November 2016, the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism adopted guidelines for cooperation among its member States in the implementation of terrorist-asset-freezing mechanisms. In April 2016, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate launched a database of authorities responsible for issuing third-party terrorist-asset-freezing requests, which currently includes information on 85 States. In September 2016, the Financial Action Task Force issued a handbook designed to strengthen the implementation of asset-freezing mechanisms developed under resolution 1373 (2001).

3. Increased integration of financial intelligence into counter-terrorism work

38. Security Council resolution 2253 (2015) calls on States to engage with financial institutions and the private sector and share information on terrorism-financing risks. In this regard, it is essential to protect the international financial system from abuse and to provide the private sector with the tools to monitor transactions, detect any unusual activity and prevent funds from being made available to individuals or entities associated with ISIL. This will become increasingly important as liberated areas re-establish their links to international financial institutions. In my second report pursuant to resolution 2253, I noted the piloting of public-private terrorism-financing information-sharing platforms. I am pleased to note that these platforms have been adopted by an increasing number of States, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, and would call on Member States to consider linking them.

39. States continue to strengthen links among their respective financial intelligence units and reporting entities. Through its ongoing dialogue with Member States, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has been able to identify several good practices in this area. One European State recently introduced legislation enabling its financial intelligence unit to provide reporting entities with the names of individuals and entities considered to pose a terrorism-financing risk, prior to the submission of a suspicious transaction report. The collection of financial intelligence is key to the identification of the financial patterns of foreign terrorist fighters, the monitoring of individuals and the identification of possible terrorist networks, ISIL facilitators and supporters. Europol hosts FIU.net, a decentralized computer network that connects all 28 European Union financial intelligence units and facilitates the sharing of suspicious transaction reports. UNODC provides financial-disruption training and courses for counter-financing of terrorism investigators in Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia and other States in North Africa, Central Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

40. Financial intelligence has become more systematically integrated into counter-terrorism work. In one Asian State, the financial intelligence unit and the national counter-terrorism agency recently signed a memorandum of understanding to formalize their partnership in this area. The financial intelligence unit of one European State recently joined an existing joint task force for the investigation of

specific threats, such as social welfare fraud committed by national foreign terrorist fighters. Other information-sharing models include the establishment of centres for the sharing and analysis of information by all financial agencies — including customs, as well as immigration — in order to build financial profiles of foreign terrorist fighters and determine financial patterns, for the benefit of the private sector. The Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force has established an Operational Experts Forum on Terrorist Financing targeted at financial intelligence units, law enforcement, and security/intelligence agencies in order to share information on terrorism-financing risks, methods and trends and exchange experience and expertise in identifying, preventing and disrupting terrorism financing.

4. Raising and moving funds

41. Money-services businesses, including those providing informal value-transfer systems (e.g., hawala), are vulnerable to abuse. Because money continues to flow from ISIL-controlled territory to affiliates or to be banked in safer locations, close monitoring of informal money-remitters activity and cross-border transportation of cash and other bearer negotiable instruments remains an essential component of an effective counter-financing of terrorism strategy. Since December 2015, three States in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and three States in Central Asia have taken concrete steps to strengthen measures relating to money-remitters and cash couriers. In West Africa, remitters and cash services continue to be highly vulnerable to terrorism financing. Even though cash-declaration systems are in place in most West African States, particularly for outgoing flows, large movements of illicit cash persist, including along the trafficking routes of the Sahel. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has identified a similar vulnerability in East Africa.

42. Cross-border movement of cash and bearer negotiable instruments is a significant risk in all States in South-East Asia. The region's Financial Intelligence Consultative Group has initiated an in-depth study of cross-border cash movements to support stronger monitoring and disruption at critical border points. The Group will also conduct a regional intelligence assessment to better understand cross-border movement practices and how they are used for terrorism financing. There is a need to further develop such arrangements, especially in regions that rely heavily on cash transactions. UNODC provides training on criminal/terrorist abuse of money remitters in Afghanistan and neighbouring States and in the Indian Ocean region.

43. Although limited information is available about terrorist use of new technologies such as virtual currencies and social media to finance their activities, States, international and regional organizations and private-sector actors are adopting laws, regulatory frameworks and guidelines to address this potential vulnerability. Technologies designed to facilitate low-cost, high-speed global transfers are rarely subject to regulatory scrutiny or due diligence requirements. Some States have banned the use of bitcoin and other virtual currencies, while others are reviewing legal frameworks to ensure that their providers are subject to anti-money-laundering/counter-financing of terrorism regulations. The European Commission is currently considering bringing all virtual currency exchange platforms under the scope of its anti-money-laundering directive in order to ensure that they apply customer due diligence controls.

44. Social media provide opportunities for terrorist organizations and individuals to promote their cause, recruit followers and raise funds, as well as to create and share content through websites and mobile applications. Since December 2016, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has been working with partners, including in the private sector, towards identifying the vulnerabilities of social media providers and defining preventive policies. The Middle East and North

Africa Financial Action Task Force and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, in close coordination with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, have launched a joint project aimed at strengthening understanding of the use, or potential use, of social media for terrorism-financing purposes. The European Union Internet Forum of the European Commission, based on voluntary cooperation between the Internet industry and European Union member States, is aimed at reducing access to terrorist content online and increasing alternative narratives online.

45. As was highlighted in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Global Implementation Survey (2016), the non-profit organizations sector continues to be exploited by terrorist organizations and their supporters, including diversion of funds, abuse of programming and false representation. Nonetheless, misinterpretation or misuse of the international requirements on non-profit organizations (particularly the related recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force) have led in some instances to overregulation of civil society organizations, which may undermine human rights protection. In June 2016 the Financial Action Task Force revised its special recommendation and interpretive note on non-profit organizations. In conducting their national anti-money-laundering/counter-financing of terrorism risk assessment, several States have initiated close consultations with the non-profit organization sector. This approach should be encouraged.

46. As I noted previously, kidnapping for ransom may become increasingly attractive to ISIL as other revenue sources decline. In this regard, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre capacity-building project on international good practices on addressing and preventing kidnapping for ransom, strengthens the capacities of Governments and non-governmental organizations in North-East and West Africa to achieve the safe recovery of hostages while simultaneously denying terrorists ransom payments and other concessions. A regional training course on kidnapping for ransom for relevant experts of the Group of Five for the Sahel (Sahel G-5) countries is being prepared by the Centre under the regional Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism (I-ACT) initiative, a capacity-building framework for the region.

B. Returnees

47. In response to the increase in the number of foreign terrorist fighters returning to their States of origin or residence, a number of States have recently amended their legislation to enable their authorities to cancel the citizenship or invalidate the travel documents of suspected foreign terrorist fighters while they are abroad. At least 10 States in various regions, including Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific, have amended legislation to enable their authorities to withdraw the citizenship of an individual who joins a designated non-State armed group at any time before or after his or her departure. In some cases, such measures can be used without a criminal conviction or the involvement of a judge. Most of these States may withdraw citizenship only in cases where the individual would not be rendered stateless (i.e., in the case of dual citizens). Several States may withdraw the citizenship of naturalized citizens. In some States, legislation lacks clear protections preventing individuals from being rendered stateless.

48. In the absence of sufficient legal grounds and admissible evidence, transit States face numerous challenges when detaining, prosecuting or extraditing suspected foreign terrorist fighters in their territory. Despite action taken in certain regions, such as the European Union, to criminalize travel for terrorist purposes, very few States have criminalized travel to designated areas as a stand-alone offence. Collecting and gathering sufficient evidence against foreign terrorist

fighters to prove intent remains difficult. There is therefore a risk that foreign terrorist fighters stopped in transit will remain free to travel onwards.

49. The longer foreign terrorist fighters remain in conflict zones, the more likely it is that they will commit acts of terrorism or other serious crimes; embrace violent extremist causes; gain further experience and training; and strengthen networks. Foreign terrorist fighters who remain in destination States may also experience direct military confrontation between foreign Governments and terrorist entities. Moreover, the networks that they build in the destination State may subsequently assist them to return or relocate undetected by providing them with fraudulent travel documents, as well as guidance in the use of broken travel patterns. In order to provide comprehensive, long-term solutions to these threats, administrative travel measures can be complemented by cooperation with other States in bringing terrorists to justice.

50. Administrative travel measures have been abused in some cases, raising concerns about the protection and promotion of international human rights and humanitarian and refugee law. Such abuse can limit the effectiveness of comprehensive strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism that leads to terrorism. Because international human rights law provides protection against refoulement, such measures can never be used in cases where an individual would be at risk of persecution in a country to which he or she is forcibly returned.

51. In enacting administrative travel measures, States should also avoid placing undue restrictions on the travel of humanitarian aid workers, as well as representatives of foreign Governments and international and regional organizations carrying out official functions. In response to the urgent need — identified by criminal justice officials — for more practical and operational guidance in this area, UNODC is developing a technical assistance programme that will provide training in the prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters for criminal justice practitioners in South-East Europe. Furthermore, within the framework of its Airport Communication Project, UNODC is developing a training curriculum that will provide front-line law enforcement officers with the skills and knowledge required to detect and interdict the travel of foreign terrorist fighters at international airports. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre is also implementing a project on advance passenger information, which aims to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. During the reporting period, the Centre carried out capacity-building consultations with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

52. In the Lake Chad Basin, the military successes achieved by the Multinational Joint Task Force and national forces have led to the surrender of significant numbers of fighters. The Lake Chad Basin States face the challenge of dealing with combatants captured during military operations, as well as the movement of individuals and groups, across borders and to and from camps for internally displaced persons and refugees. Regardless of how individuals come under their responsibility or where they are currently located, States are legally obligated to consider appropriate prosecution, to bring to justice those who have committed gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law or terrorist offences and to apply consistent criteria against which they evaluate such cases. In accordance with resolution 2349 (2017), States must also develop comprehensive measures to deal with all persons associated with a terrorist group, including, where appropriate, programmes aimed at disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, in accordance with international standards.

53. The United Nations continues to support national and regional efforts to address these complex, interrelated challenges. As referred to in previous reports pursuant to Security Council resolution 2253 (2015), the Counter-Terrorism

Implementation Task Force Office developed the United Nations capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, in close collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Monitoring Team, as mandated in Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/11. The plan is being updated to better account for the increasing threats posed by returnees.

54. In Nigeria, support for national and regional efforts will continue to build upon the technical and high-level consultations held in December 2016, at the request of the Office of the National Security Adviser and in the context of the existing European Union-Nigeria-UNODC-Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate programme on "Assisting Nigeria to strengthen rule of law-based criminal-justice responses to terrorism", funded by the European Union. In June 2017, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNODC will jointly facilitate an inter-agency workshop aimed at assisting Nigeria to build capacity on prosecution strategies and prioritization of cases; and identifying inter-agency relationships required to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of persons associated with Boko Haram. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNODC are also spearheading efforts to launch a regional initiative for the Lake Chad Basin States to support their development of national approaches to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration and the strengthening of regional cooperation.

55. UNODC continues to train criminal justice officials, in most regions of the world, in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism-related offences, in accordance with resolution 2178 (2014) and with a focus on the issue of children recruited by terrorists and violent extremist groups, particularly ISIL and Boko Haram.

56. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, acting in assistance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, is supporting the development of the country's national counter-terrorism strategy, which also addresses the prevention of violent extremism. In February 2017, the Office provided training on counter-terrorism and human rights for 50 Malian law enforcement officials. Two workshops to enhance the capacity of Malian prosecutors from the Special Judiciary Unit on counter-terrorism and the newly created Special Investigations Brigade were facilitated by UNODC and supported by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in January and February 2017. At the regional level, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities are finalizing project proposals under the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre I-ACT initiative for the Sahel G-5, an "All-of-UN" regional capacity-building programme to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, mandated by Security Council resolution 2195 (2014) and S/PRST/2015/24. In May, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force-United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre deployed a small team to Dakar and Nouakchott for consultations with the G-5 Permanent Secretariat and regional offices of the United Nations implementing partners to finalize this regional framework and plan for the I-ACT launch in the coming months.

57. United Nations engagement in the Sahel will evolve in response to the continued threats posed by terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime and illicit trans-border trafficking. I reiterate the need to strengthen partnerships between the United Nations system and regional stakeholders and to support in particular the Sahel G-5 countries' efforts to fight terrorism and illicit trafficking. The United Nations is renewing its engagement in the region, following an independent review of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

58. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute has developed initiatives aimed at introducing mechanisms into juvenile justice systems to address the situation of child foreign terrorist fighters. It also supports the development of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in correction centres in Indonesia, drawing on good international practices. INTERPOL continues to assist States to enhance the response of law enforcement agencies, including through working group meetings on the issue of returnees and their links with local militant groups. Lastly, the Radicalization Awareness Network Centre of Excellence of the European Commission is developing a manual on intervention to assist its Member States in managing returnees.

59. On 24 May 2017, the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Center will hold, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, a regional workshop on the detection of foreign terrorist fighter returnees, including their financial profiles, and on the use of asset-freezing mechanisms. In the context of its work on foreign terrorist fighters, INTERPOL is currently developing a pilot initiative, with States in the Middle East/North Africa, South-East Asia and Central Asia, for the inclusion of relevant financial information in the profiles of selected foreign terrorist fighters/returnees.

V. Observations

60. Since my first report (S/2016/92), several factors have exacerbated the challenges faced by States in countering the threat posed by ISIL. In the wake of military and financial setbacks to ISIL, foreign terrorist fighters are increasingly leaving the battlefield, returning to their States of origin or residence or relocating to third States, including conflict zones. The threat posed by these individuals is compounded by the efforts of ISIL to strengthen the role of its affiliates, by inspiring, guiding and, in some cases, centrally directing individuals to launch attacks on civilian targets. In order to address these challenges, States should not only assess the travel routes used by foreign terrorist fighters seeking to join ISIL, but also strengthen their monitoring of exit routes. Efforts to control foreign terrorist fighter travel should be complemented by measures to ensure that foreign terrorist fighters are brought to justice. States continue to face numerous challenges to generating and converting intelligence into admissible evidence against suspected returning fighters. Measures to strengthen cooperation and to build capacities in this area, as well as additional measures, such as improving the collection, preservation and sharing of information and evidence in conflict theatres and attack sites, are particularly important.

61. Effective monitoring of terrorist exploitation of information and communications technology, conducted in accordance with human rights obligations, is important in order to identify other effective ways in which to prevent and suppress the dissemination of terrorist messages and the raising of funds for terrorist purposes.

62. I wish to reiterate the benefits of developing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returning foreign terrorist fighters in accordance with resolution 2178 (2014). Such strategies can be integrated into criminal justice responses at various stages of the criminal justice process, including outside the prison setting; and can facilitate a proportionate, individualized, long-term and human rights-compliant approach. They can also serve to pre-empt serious criminal conduct, reduce prison-based recruitment, and complement comprehensive strategies to counter violent extremism.

63. The development and implementation of strategies to address specific categories of returnees could also be beneficial. Continued recruitment of women by ISIL and the involvement of children as fighters remain major concerns. There is an urgent need to focus increased attention on the factors that lead to the recruitment, exploitation and abuse, for terrorist purposes, of vulnerable members of society — especially children — with a view to identifying the main gaps; ensuring the adequate protection and support of such populations, including when they are victims of trafficking in persons, and developing approaches that address their specific reintegration needs.

64. In seeking to address the threats posed by ISIL, including that of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees, adequate protection should also be provided for refugees fleeing conflict zones. There is concern that the increase in migrant flows, due in part to the impact of ISIL in conflict areas, has had a negative effect on the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution. Measures taken by States to control foreign terrorist fighter travel — such as withdrawing the citizenship of suspected foreign terrorist fighters, pushing migrants back at national borders; and extraditing, expelling and deporting individuals without due process — raise important human rights issues and risk rerouting foreign terrorist fighters to other States. In some cases, such measures have created an environment conducive to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Measures to ensure effective and appropriate registration and review of asylum seekers and refugees, to systematically share information concerning decisions to reject refugees or asylum seekers and exchange information at the national and international levels could be encouraged. Furthermore, because ISIL is increasingly encouraging its fighters and sympathizers to carry out attacks in the States in which they reside, the protection of critical infrastructure, in close cooperation with relevant private sector entities and in accordance with Council resolution 2341 (2017) is particularly relevant.

65. As it continues to lose territory and financial sources, ISIL may continue to explore ways to diversify its sources of financing, including through illicit trafficking in goods, cultural and archaeological artefacts, drugs, wildlife and human beings. I reiterate the recommendation that States make increased use of the cooperation tools provided for in relevant international counter-terrorism legal instruments, as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2001 and the Protocols thereto, the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 2004, and the relevant conventions on combating trafficking in drugs. The recent adoption of a judicial cooperation agreement and increased information-sharing on terrorism and organized crime among Chad, Niger and Mali is an encouraging development. Attention should be paid to potential cases of human trafficking to finance terrorism, as underlined by the Council in its resolution 2331 (2016).

66. Member States have made progress, with the support of international and regional organizations, in strengthening their internal coordination and information-sharing mechanisms. Understanding the terrorism-financing risks and vulnerabilities of certain sectors, including non-profit organizations and money remitters is particularly relevant in that respect. National, subregional and supranational risk assessments should be particularly encouraged in certain regions, such as the Sahel, where the terrorism-financing threat is high.

67. States continue to be hampered by legal and institutional barriers that prevent the effective flow of information, largely on the basis of security concerns. There is a need to integrate financial intelligence collected from private-sector and Government entities (including welfare agencies) into a comprehensive operational counter-terrorism strategy aimed at detecting suspicious financial flows, as well as possible networks or cells and to disrupt their facilitation, recruitment and

operations. Traditional methods — including formal and informal cash couriers or money remitters — are still widely employed by terrorist groups. Strengthening the measures aimed at detecting illicit cross-border cash movements and the sharing of this information with the financial intelligence units can contribute to address these vulnerabilities. Virtual currencies and other online payment methods have been used to raise and move terrorist funds. The risk for such use is growing and requires particular attention.

68. This is my fifth report to the Council pursuant to resolution 2253 (2015). Since January 2016, ISIL and its affiliates have remained under continuous military pressure and experienced setbacks. It is critical for Member States to remain vigilant, however, as the dynamic and increasingly transnational threat that these terrorist groups represent continues to severely undermine international peace and security. I therefore welcome the focus that the Security Council has put on ISIL and its affiliates to raise awareness of the threat and to promote international cooperation. Nonetheless, more needs to be done at the national, regional and global levels to collaboratively address the threats and challenges pointed out in these five reports. In my report on the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/71/858), which is currently being considered by the General Assembly, I recommended the establishment of a new office of counter-terrorism to provide leadership to our efforts, enhance coordination and increase the impact of our assistance to Member States. Through this and other initiatives, the United Nations system will step up its support to Member States' efforts to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

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Letter dated 30 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to send you the report of the fourteenth annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council, which was held on 3 and 4 November 2016 at the Greentree Foundation in Manhasset, New York (see annex). The final report has been compiled in accordance with the Chatham House Rule under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Finland.

On the basis of the very positive feedback that we have received from the participants each year, the Government of Finland remains committed to sponsoring the workshop as an annual event. The Government of Finland hopes that the report will contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of the work of the Council.

I should be grateful, accordingly, if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kai **Sauer**
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 30 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

"Hitting the ground running": fourteenth annual workshop for newly elected members of the Security Council

3 and 4 November 2016

Greentree Foundation
Manhasset, New York

The Government of Finland, in conjunction with the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University and the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, convened the fourteenth annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council on 3 and 4 November 2016.

Over the years, the annual workshops have served two primary purposes. Their founding and sustaining purpose has been to give the newly elected members a deeper understanding of the dynamics, practices, procedures and working methods of the Security Council so that they are in a position to "hit the ground running" when their terms on the Council commence the following January. A second, complementary, purpose has emerged over time: to provide current, as well as incoming, members with an unparalleled opportunity to reflect on the work of the Council in an informal and interactive setting. To further those goals, the conversations have been conducted under the Chatham House rule of non-attribution. In the present report, therefore, the only speakers identified are those at the opening dinner.

On 3 November, the opening dinner featured welcoming remarks by the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Kai Sauer, a keynote address by the President of the Asia Society Policy Institute and former Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and closing remarks by the President of the Security Council and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, Fodé Seck.

The full-day programme, on 4 November, included round-table exchanges among all participants on the following three themes:

(a) State of the Security Council 2016: taking stock and looking ahead (session I);

(b) Working methods and subsidiary bodies (session II);

(c) Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2016 (session III).

Opening dinner

In his keynote address, Mr. Rudd described the work and findings of the Independent Commission on Multilateralism, which he chaired. The Commission sought to examine the performance of the United Nations system and assess how well it was equipped to meet the challenges of global governance in the twenty-first century. The Commission addressed a wide range of thematic areas of the Organization's work and consulted widely with key stakeholders, ultimately producing both a Chair's report, *UN 2030: Rebuilding Order in a Fragmenting World*, and the Commission's report, *Pulling Together: The Multilateral System and*

Its Future. The work of the Commission was both diagnostic and prescriptive, identifying macro-challenges as well as organizing principles.

Mr. Rudd highlighted a series of macro-challenges to the international system, as follows:

(a) First, there is a strong global consensus on the need for a stronger, not weaker, United Nations. This consensus is the product of the dynamics of current geopolitical and geo-economic forces, the challenges of globalization, the proliferation of non-State actors, some committed to the destruction of the inter-State system, and the proliferation of new, potentially destructive, technologies;

(b) Second, there is an equally strong consensus that the United Nations, although not yet broken, is in serious trouble and needs to be bolstered on multiple levels. There is growing evidence of States "walking around" the United Nations system to address a series of critical problems. The functional effectiveness of key United Nations agencies has been increasingly questioned;

(c) Third, from a longer-range historical perspective, there is little reason to expect that the United Nations, or any other institution, will last forever. With much of human history characterized by disorder, the United Nations represents a thin blue line between civilization and barbarism and between global order and disorder;

(d) Fourth, active efforts to reinvigorate and reinvent the institution will be required on a continuing basis to equip the United Nations to respond to a growing list of global challenges and dilemmas;

(e) Fifth, the Member States, large and small, including, critically, the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, need to decide whether they want a fully functioning and effective multilateral system. If so, then they must own it, argue for it and demonstrate their readiness to re-energize and reinvent it;

(f) Sixth, the course of great power politics is raising questions about the future of neo-liberal institutionalism and geopolitical challenges that are far beyond the control of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Rudd then outlined 10 principles that had been identified over the course of the Independent Commission on Multilateralism process, as follows:

(a) **Principle 1**. A comprehensive doctrine of prevention across the entire United Nations system needs to be articulated and implemented. This should extend across the peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian spheres. This shift would have major implications for the ways in which the United Nations Secretariat goes about policy planning and political affairs;

(b) **Principle 2**. The United Nations needs a new, comprehensive doctrine of delivery before it drowns in a sea of reports produced by a myriad of high-level panels and independent commissions. Report-writing must not become a substitute for effective, measurable and accountable action and delivery on the ground;

(c) **Principle 3**. To that end, field operations need to be permanently prioritized over the centre. Building on the One United Nations Initiative, a fully integrated, multi-disciplinary "Team United Nations" approach is needed for delivery around the world;

(d) **Principle 4**. As an immediate priority, the problem of institutional silos needs to be dealt with both at Headquarters and in the field. The Independent Commission on Multilateralism process has proposed an extensive recasting of the top echelons of the Secretariat for that purpose;

(e) **Principle 5**. Meeting the far-reaching goals and targets of the 2030Agenda for Sustainable Development will require a focused effort at the highest levels, both in Member States and in the United Nations. Again, the Commission identified a series of steps that the world body could take to further those common objectives;

(f) **Principle 6**. Rather than trying to do everything, the United Nations should develop a more formal global compact between the public and private development sectors to facilitate joint assessments and the prioritization of collective efforts;

(g) **Principle 7**. A new "Agenda for peace, security and development" is needed to integrate the Organization's valuable work across all sectors;

(h) **Principle 8**. Women should be integrated throughout the United Nations system and should hold half of all United Nations management positions, at Headquarters and in the field, by 2030;

(i) **Principle 9**. Structural youth unemployment needs to be tackled as a high priority, including through the establishment by the General Assembly of a subsidiary organ called "United Nations Youth";

(j) **Principle 10**. Given the acute budgetary constraints, the reform of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly should be a matter of high priority.

Following the address by Mr. Rudd, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offered some informal remarks. He stressed the importance of the relationship between the Security Council and the Secretary-General and the value of the various mechanisms, such as the monthly lunches, the annual retreat and the opportunities for briefings, for mutual engagement.

In the view of the Secretary-General, progress on maintaining international peace and security had been made over the past decade. The peacekeeping operation in Timor-Leste had been completed successfully and those in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia had been drawn down. Owing to timely interventions, there had been peaceful transitions in Burkina Faso and Guinea. The peacekeeping and police summits had resulted in important pledges from Member States. Partnerships with regional organizations had been strengthened. In a number of ways, women had assumed greater roles in peace and security matters. Steps were under way to implement the findings and recommendations of the reviews of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). By addressing the security implications of climate change and the differential impact of armed conflict on women and children, the Council had expanded traditional understandings of peace and security in positive and useful ways.

Nevertheless, continued the Secretary-General, serious challenges remained. Peace operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, the Sudan and Western Sahara faced a "crisis of consent." The Council needed to show strong and consistent support for the missions and personnel that it deployed. Preventing sexual abuse and exploitation and protecting civilians remained key challenges. Peace operations deserved the tools, resources and mandates required for success. He noted that his decision to replace the force commander of the mission in South Sudan had been both controversial and necessary.

Moving from conflict management to conflict prevention, noted the Secretary-General, would require a more substantial and targeted investment in preventive diplomacy. That would be enormously cost-effective. The unanimous support for Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on peacebuilding and the prevention of a recurrence of conflict was encouraging, but too often, differences within the Council

on the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen had spilled over into other matters, sometimes with paralyzing effects. The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, especially Goal 16, addressed important aspects of prevention, as did the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They demonstrated, as well, that humanity was still capable of coming together despite divergent perspectives. That spirit needed to inspire the work of the Council, which could do much to help the incoming Secretary-General achieve his prevention goals.

Imploring the members of the Security Council not to let differences in one area spill into others, the Secretary-General cautioned against letting the drive for unanimity block timely and much-needed action. Consensus should not be equated with unanimity, especially in life and death situations. While resolutions on non-procedural matters could be blocked by a veto, presidential statements and press statements required absolute unanimity. It was unreasonable, that resolutions could be passed with nine affirmative votes, while press statements could be blocked by a dissent from any member. To avoid being silent on crucial issues, the members of the Council should consider reforms in that matter.

During the ensuing discussion period, both the Secretary-General and Mr. Rudd responded to questions and comments. There were exchanges on ways to increase the number of women in United Nations posts both at Headquarters and in the field, how to enhance accountability within the United Nations system, how to improve the quality and training of contingents supplied for peacekeeping operations, how to enhance the relevance and restore the political capital of the United Nations and how to discourage the scheduling of so many side events during the high-level week at the opening of the General Assembly, to permit greater focus on high-priority matters.

The next morning, at the opening of the round-table sessions of the workshop, introductory remarks were made by the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, Hasmik Egian, and by Edward C. Luck of the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University.

Session I
State of the Security Council 2016: taking stock and looking ahead

Moderator

Ambassador Matthew Rycroft
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Commentators

Ambassador Amr Aboulatta
Permanent Representative of Egypt

Ambassador François Delattre
Permanent Representative of France

Ambassador Haitao Wu
Deputy Permanent Representative of China

The agenda for session I contained the following questions:

- How well is the Council fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security? How would you assess its

performance in 2016 in this regard compared with 2015 and earlier years? Where is it performing relatively well or relatively poorly? Why?

- Which benchmarks should be employed to gauge the extent to which the Council has or has not been successful over the past year? Are you encouraged or discouraged about its prospects for 2017? In which situations and thematic issues is it poised to make the most positive difference in the coming year?

- At this point, the Council is being asked to address a wider range of peace and security challenges than at any other time over the past seven decades. Which of the following challenges have proved most daunting or problematic over the past year: conflict prevention, peacemaking and conflict resolution, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, sanctions oversight, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance, atrocity prevention and/or civilian protection? In which of these areas could the Council improve its performance in 2017 and beyond? What specific steps could be undertaken to enhance its capacity and effectiveness in some of these areas?

- At recent "Hitting the ground running" workshops, it has been noted that the members of the Council have remained focused and productive on many issues even though sharp differences have been evident on others. Nevertheless, is there reason to be concerned that growing tension in some parts of the world, such as the Middle East, could begin to affect the Council's effectiveness and reputation, while complicating other situations and issues? How could non-permanent members assist the search for common ground within the Council in such difficult times? Are newly elected members likely to face particular challenges in this regard in 2017?

- For several years, quantitative measures suggest that the Council has been increasing the share of its time and attention devoted to the Middle East, while the relative share devoted to Africa has declined modestly. Yet, the portion of its decisions and outcomes related to Africa has remained relatively high. Do these trends reflect the depth and breadth of the peace and security challenges in the two regions, the degree of difficulty reaching consensus on the issues presented, or other factors? Within the two regions, where do the opportunities for positive contributions by the Council in 2017 appear to be greatest? Where have its efforts fallen short in 2016?

- At past workshops, participants have often underscored the importance of conflict prevention, while lamenting that the Council too often has been ill-equipped or ill-prepared to engage in effective operational or structural prevention. Is this an endemic weakness owing to institutional factors or one that can and is being addressed? How could the Council improve its preventive efforts in 2017 and beyond? Has the Council's engagement in the situation in Burundi offered any lessons for conflict prevention efforts elsewhere?

- Likewise, the value of collaborative work with regional and subregional arrangements is regularly stressed at the workshops, although perceptions of actual practice have been mixed.

  - For instance, at the 2015 workshop, it was asserted that the Council's interactions with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union had been too formal and too scripted. Is that still the case, given the multiple times that the Council engaged with the Peace and Security Council, visited Africa and addressed collaboration with the African Union in 2016? How much progress has been achieved on the ambitious cooperative agenda laid out in the presidential statement of 24 May 2016 (S/PRST/2016/8)?

- In 2016, members of the Security Council and members of the League of Arab States held their first consultative meeting, in Cairo. There was also a briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and formal and informal meetings on strengthening cooperation with the European Union. What follow-up steps, if any, might be anticipated in 2017? Are there ways that the Council might support the on-the-ground efforts of OSCE related to the situation around Ukraine?

- Beyond these individual initiatives, should the members of the Security Council consider undertaking a more strategic and generic review of its interactions with regional and subregional arrangements? When and where have such collaborations added value? How and why? And where have they fallen short?

- According to the Highlights of Security Council Practice 2015, "In 2015, the Council continued its practice of including provisions on cross-cutting issues, namely, the protection of civilians, women and peace and security, and children and armed conflict, in its decisions relating to country-specific or regional situations. In 2015, 79 per cent of resolutions and presidential statements relating to country-specific or regional situations contained one or more provisions on protection of civilians, 59 per cent on women and peace and security and 48 per cent on children and armed conflict." From a normative standpoint, these numbers suggest a growing willingness to include the language of human protection in Council decisions. Less clear, especially when record numbers of people have been forcibly displaced, is whether these cross-cutting concerns have been carried out on the ground. How might the Council begin to narrow this gap between expectations and performance over the coming years? Specifically, what more could be done to realize the promise of resolution 1325 (2000)?

- What more could be done to address the acute humanitarian emergencies in Iraq, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen? What lessons could be derived from the Council's experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia? What was learned, in this regard, from the Council's three missions to Africa in 2016? What steps could the Council take to improve its anticipation of and response to signs of imminent mass atrocities?

- One of the areas in which the members of the Council have demonstrated broad and sustained cooperation has been counter-terrorism. As the campaigns to deny the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and other armed groups the control of territory continue to progress, it is possible that the threats they pose could become more diffuse and unpredictable. Under such circumstances, what form is the Council's role in countering terrorism and violent extremism likely to take? Where will its comparative advantages lie? What specific new measures should it consider in 2017 and beyond?

- As cybersecurity emerges as a universal security concern, is there either a normative or operational role to be played by the Council in addressing its implications for governments, the private sector and civil society alike?

- With tensions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rising, are there additional measures that could be undertaken by the Council in the coming year? Could the implementation of existing sanctions be tightened? Should new approaches to diplomacy and conflict resolution be considered?

- The series of declarations, reviews and reports produced in 2015 concerning peace operations, peacekeeping modernization, sanctions, peacebuilding and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) contained a wide range of recommendations and commitments about how to enhance these aspects of the Council's work. Are there implementation steps that should be regarded as priorities for the coming year?

Assessment of the performance of the Security Council in 2016

Participants expressed a range of views about how well the Security Council had been performing. It was noted that the Council members had worked very hard in 2016, addressing a wide scope of issues and regional situations. They had passed more resolutions than in recent years, including many with strong substantive content. The resolution on the mandate for the operation in Mali, for instance, included many elements and demonstrated a comprehensive approach to the issues in that country. Sanctions had been lifted on Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, reflecting progress in both situations. The Council had shown unity in support of the peace process in Colombia, as well as in the selection of the Secretary-General. It had enhanced its collaboration with regional and subregional arrangements in South Sudan, the Sudan and elsewhere. In short, concluded the speaker, the Council had lived up to its obligations in 2016.

Although there were no grounds for complacency, commented an interlocutor, the members of the Security Council had demonstrated flexibility in tackling emerging threats, such as aviation security, terrorist financing and the return of foreign terrorist fighters to their countries of origin. The Council had shown unity in identifying ways to counter those common threats, and now its members needed to work together to implement and enforce the steps that had been agreed.

According to another participant, there was a tendency among some observers to be too gloomy about the performance of the Security Council. Efforts by the Council and by its permanent members had bolstered stability in Central Asia and Eurasia, for example. Some of the current difficulties within the Council could be attributed to a post-Cold War, post-colonial syndrome. It would take some time to adapt to changing conditions in the world, but the mentality of Council members had begun to adapt.

Citing a question from the background paper prepared by Mr. Luck, a speaker asked why the standing of the Security Council appeared to be so low in public eyes. Doing more and doing better were two different things. The statistics suggested that the Council had more on its plate than ever before, not that it was handling the myriad challenges more adeptly. There was a need to assess what was working and what was getting in the way of greater progress, as well as how to prioritize the use of time and how to handle the most difficult situations. According to a second participant, there was a dual problem: one, the Council tried to do too much without delivering what was most needed in a timely fashion and two, too many of the core peace and security issues were decided outside of the Council. The members needed to reaffirm that the Council was the primary organ for maintaining international peace and security and act accordingly or to move on to other things.

A speaker contended that public perceptions of the Security Council were quite negative owing to its ineffectiveness in dealing with the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and other conflicts in the Middle East. Its performance had been compromised by the national interests of some members, as respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter, for international humanitarian law and for international law in general had been ebbing to a worrisome degree. It was difficult to hold the Council accountable, in part because it paid too little attention to the

views of the parties to conflict and to respecting international rules of behaviour. According to another participant, the discussion had highlighted some significant successes, although most of the exchange largely focused on areas where the Council could perform better in the coming year.

The Security Council faced a crisis of relevance, in the view of a speaker, because it had been engaged in producing paper, documents and noise instead of making a difference on the critical issues before it. It was pretending, not doing. It was treating outcomes as ends in themselves. As a result, the relevance of the Council had come into question when important crises, such as the war in the Syrian Arab Republic and the nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, were being handled elsewhere. Few members had seen that agreement before they were asked to vote on it. An interlocutor contended that the Council had been talking too much and implementing too little. Another participant, however, pointed out that many agreements developed outside the Council were then brought to it for implementation and/or legitimation. That allowed for some interactive engagement and assured the continuing relevance of the Council.

The credibility of the Security Council was at stake, it was said, given the perceptions that both the public and other Member States had of its performance. Its relevance was on the line when it failed to prevent mass atrocities in the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, such as in South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen. That sense of frustration was palpable within the Council itself. People were not naïve, countered a second speaker, and their expectations of the Council were not overly high. They did expect, however, for members to pursue the larger interests of the international community and not only their own national interests. A third interlocutor suggested that non-members of the Council, especially developing countries, had been disappointed that their initiatives and proposals had not been addressed by the Council. They felt as though their voice had been in a wilderness.

The question of unity within the Security Council received much attention, some of it in response to the comments of the Secretary-General at the opening dinner. There was a chance, it was asserted, to build on the unity that had been achieved on the selection process for the Secretary-General, as well as on the peace process in Colombia, on Lebanon and on counter-terrorism. In that regard, the search for a common position on the non-proliferation challenges with chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and with nuclear weapons in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a continuing challenge, but the Council could build on the unity it had achieved in dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Another participant suggested that, when the Council was united, its decisions carried more weight politically. The Council appeared weaker when it was divided.

A speaker compared the Security Council to a family that did not agree on everything. While seeking consensus, it needed to accept that there could be legitimate differences of opinion that needed to be aired and sorted out. Unity should not always be the ultimate goal. In that regard, a participant recalled what the Secretary-General had said at the dinner, namely, that the Council's rules requiring consensus had had a negative effect on its capacity for decisive and effective action. An interlocutor agreed that differences within the Council could be legitimate and that the Secretary-General had been right about the downside of requiring consensus on every press statement.

It was noted that, from a political perspective, unity within the Security Council could make a difference when speaking to another country or party to a conflict, but that was not required under the Charter and should not be over-emphasized. A participant commented that the Secretary-General had made a valid point about the requirement for a complete consensus on presidential statements and

press statements, but that all members needed to recognize that a Council decision was binding no matter their views during the process of negotiations or the way they voted. To act otherwise would only lessen the legitimacy of the Council and undermine its reputation.

Concurring with the point by the Secretary-General on the sometimes negative consequences of the exercise of a collective veto on presidential statements and press statements, a speaker suggested that that indicated the value of allocating more time during informal meetings for drafting and less for going around the table for prepared statements. Also agreeing with the observation by the Secretary-General, a participant remarked that it underscored the need for a broader reform of the decision-making process within the Council, especially given the frequency of resolutions being adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter and the tendency to produce more resolutions than could possibly be implemented.

According to another participant, unity within the Security Council had been negatively affected on several occasions by the actions of the penholder. The penholders had the power to foster unity or division among Council members, depending on whether they took on board drafting suggestions by other members. The latter had occurred in the case of resolution 2272 (2016) on sexual exploitation and abuse related to peace operations and resolution 2310 (2016) on nuclear non-proliferation. Two interlocutors pointed out that sometimes penholders faced difficult questions of timing and how best to move the drafting process forward.

Several interlocutors commented on the need to maintain a firewall between the most divisive issues and others where there were fewer differences. It was asserted that differences over the Syrian Arab Republic, which profoundly divided the Security Council, had begun to affect deliberations on other matters. Resolutions on Burundi (2303 (2016)) and South Sudan (2304 (2016)) were adopted by smaller majorities, statements on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on Mali had been more difficult to negotiate, and it had been hard to maintain the consensus on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the Syrian Arab Republic was the defining issue of our times, the Council was facing other tough issues as well, such as Libya, South Sudan, Yemen and the Middle East peace process. It was therefore essential not to let problems over the Syrian Arab Republic pollute the good work that had been done in other areas. A participant agreed with that point, noting that bolstering the firewall was essential to the productive functioning of the Council.

Of course, attempts should be made to keep differences over the Syrian Arab Republic from spilling over into other areas, it was stressed, but that had proved very difficult to do. In some cases, such as on Burundi and South Sudan, the Council was close to a consensus until the penholder imposed a draft and forced a vote. More negotiations might have bridged the remaining differences. One speaker commented that the firewall had, in fact, been working relatively well. Some issues, however, were linked substantively and were bound to affect each other. Another suggested that the best way to maintain the firewall was to abide by the rules.

The Security Council, it was said, was most effective when it was actively engaged on the ground in an effort to prevent conflicts from breaking out or escalating. Mediation efforts in Guinea-Bissau, for instance, had been quite effective. A participant agreed on the importance of preventive diplomacy and urged that the Council should employ the tools of prevention and mediation more comprehensively. The Council, commented another speaker, had not been sufficiently engaged with the countries involved in the situations it addressed, such as the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Similarly, it was evident that some of the things that had occurred in South Sudan might have been prevented if there had been more active Council engagement on the ground. One

speaker commented that few Permanent Representatives had listened to the briefings by the representatives of regional organizations in the open debate on cooperation with them, while another participant responded that it might have been because members of the Council did not believe that those groups always added value to prevention efforts. The problem, in part, was on their side.

It was contended that the successes of peace operations and the good work of peacekeepers needed to be communicated more effectively both to the public and to the wider United Nations membership. There were many good stories to tell in Africa, such as the successful efforts in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and the ongoing good work in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. The Council's multiple visits to Africa in 2016 had helped members to learn about such wider United Nations efforts and operations and how to bolster them as needed. A speaker commented, however, that briefings on Mali and South Sudan had also highlighted the challenges they faced. It was particularly evident that the mission in South Sudan lacked the capacity to adequately protect civilians and to fulfil its mandate. Those experiences raised the question of whether the United Nations was functioning well enough. Another interlocutor pointed out that the Council had not held a proper debate on the report by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, nor had it acted on its recommendations.

Although the selection process for the Secretary-General was widely seen as a successful step forward, areas for further progress in improving that process were also noted. The result was good, commented an interlocutor, but there were problems with the way the results of the straw polls were announced and it was not clear that straw polls were necessarily the ideal way to select such a critical leader, given that other organizations had adopted more transparent processes. Lessons needed to be drawn in order to avoid similar problems in the future. Concurring, another participant asserted that the Security Council should be ashamed by the lack of transparency. In 5 or 10 years, there could well be another General Assembly resolution demanding full transparency.

The Security Council, in the view of a speaker, had begun to address issues that were not central to the maintenance of international peace and security and could be regarded as encroachments on the mandates of other intergovernmental organs. That had distracted attention from core issues and had, at times, raised concerns about how Article 2 (7) of the Charter was being interpreted. The work of the Council had not always been as adaptable to changing times as it should have been, given the emphasis on precedent even as circumstances had changed. Another participant pointed out that there remained differences within the Council about how broadly threats to international peace and security should be cast and about how sovereignty and the provisions of Article 2 (7) of the Charter should be understood.

Challenges ahead

A number of participants identified the transition to a new Secretary-General as an opportunity for dialogue and the testing of new ideas and approaches. One referred to the suggestions in that regard offered by Mr. Rudd at the opening dinner. A second urged an early informal meeting with the incoming Secretary-General for a global review of threats to international peace and security and for an exchange on the way forward. A third suggested an informal dialogue, like the one at the workshop, with the new Secretary-General, perhaps over breakfast. A fourth speaker seconded the idea, while a fifth proposed that the Secretary-General participate once a month in one of the Council's informal meetings. That would be far preferable to the overly rigid monthly lunches with the Secretary-General. According to another participant, there was a need both for an early session before the Secretary-General took office and for regular informal meetings with him, perhaps twice monthly. At

the outset, it would be important to know more about his vision, as well as what he expected from the Council. Such exchanges would also provide an opportunity to ask the Secretary-General about his plans to restructure the Secretariat.

Given that the Security Council functioned as part of the larger United Nations system, a speaker called for a new impetus from the Secretary-General to break down silos and engender better interdepartmental collaboration. Too often, in the peace and security realm, the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing. The new Secretary-General, concurred another interlocutor, would have the opportunity to increase trust and decrease barriers. Agreeing on the need to break down silos within the Secretariat, a participant urged the initiation of a dialogue between the new Secretary-General and the Council on how to sustain peace in a way that went beyond distinctions between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. That was an area that called out for fresh thinking and analysis. A speaker stressed that effective prevention required a high degree of trust between the Council and the Secretary-General. The new Secretary-General could bring new energy to that quest, while an early dialogue between him and the Council could both identify new approaches and help to establish that essential trust. Another interlocutor called on the Council to make a more comprehensive use of prevention, dialogue and mediation, which would entail a fuller degree of collaboration with other principal organs, including with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat.

In the view of a participant, there was a huge gap between peacekeeping mandates and the capacity to deliver on them. That s was a question that should be raised early on with the new Secretary-General and the suggestion, made earlier at the workshop, that the Council address the report by the High-level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations more carefully was welcome. An interlocutor urged that greater attention be paid to the linkage between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including to closer collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission. According to another speaker, the Council needed to find ways of improving the quality of troops provided to peacekeeping, supporting the political work of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and coordinating with development agencies in situations addressed by the Council.

One of the most dramatic developments of recent years, it was emphasized, was the complete disregard for international humanitarian law. Schools and hospitals could no longer be considered safe havens. The Security Council had not been able to ensure accountability in such cases, bringing its credibility into question. Although the behaviour of non-State armed groups was a big part of the problem, they were not the only perpetrators. Reversing that trend should be a high priority for the Council. The trend represented a fundamental challenge to the rule of law, noted another participant, and the Council needed to do better when it came to implementing mandates on the protection of civilians.

Although there were limits to how much attention the Security Council could devote to cross-cutting issues, it was noted, it was essential that the Council consider such matters seriously, given that they would become the threats of tomorrow. The thinking of Council members needed to adapt to emerging threats to the maintenance of international peace and security. A speaker pointed out that the way the world responded to climate change and sustainable development challenges could have an effect on peace and security. It appeared, commented another participant, that some Council members believed that it should address a broader range of issues and others a narrower range.

Several other matters were mentioned as substantive priorities for 2017. The Security Council needed to maintain its unity in dealing with the threat of terrorism, including when issues of ideology were raised. An interlocutor called for greater

transparency in decision-making related to sanctions, given legal and political challenges. In the view of a participant, the crisis in Yemen deserved higher priority attention from the Council. If not addressed more effectively, the situation could foreshadow a major geopolitical shift that could affect the Horn of Africa. In terms of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, an interlocutor asked whether more thought should be given to reviving a political process to replace the suspended six party talks. Sanctions alone might not be an adequate engagement. In response, it was pointed out that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had refused to talk about the denuclearization of the peninsula and seemed to only want to talk to the United States of America bilaterally. The focus, unfortunately, had been on the short term, when thought needed to be given to the longer-term future of the peoples there.

Improving collaboration with regional arrangements, it was said, would be a major challenge in 2017, as would be working out an effective division of labour with other United Nations bodies. More reflection was needed, according to a participant, on how the United Nations and its Security Council fit into the larger sphere of international political decision-making. For the Council, that was a question both of relating to other formats and processes and of interacting with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the European Union, on an ongoing basis. The Council, commented another speaker, would be open to hearing new ideas on those matters.

As in previous workshops, there was substantial discussion of relations among the members of the Security Council. It was posited that the 5 permanent members should reach out more to the 10 elected members, while the 10 elected members should reach out more to their regional constituencies. The latter would enhance the effectiveness of their work in the Council. A speaker responded that, in practice, the differences on most issues did not fall along those lines, as there were usually a range of views among both the 5 permanent members and the 10 elected members. The goal, commented another participant, was to achieve consensus among all members. An interlocutor agreed that on most issues, there were no rigid divisions between permanent and non-permanent members, but there was a steel ceiling, not a glass one, between them when it came to the veto and other privileges that came with permanent status within the Council.

When the permanent members refused to innovate, it was noted, that had led to unity among the elected members, which would act as a group to try to fix shortcomings in the way the Security Council functioned. According to another speaker, there had been insufficient opportunities for give-and-take exchanges among all 15 members of the Council. The permanent members should make more of an effort to engage with the elected members on a more regular basis. What should the elected members do, asked an interlocutor, when the five permanent members were deeply divided? How could they make a difference?

Across the board, it was suggested, the biggest challenge confronting the Security Council in the coming year would be implementation. Among the places where the Council needed to do better, commented another participant, were improving the role of penholders, achieving greater unity, improving implementation and enforcement, enhancing peacekeeping, getting more out of visits to the field, assuring accountability and working with the new Secretary-General.

Sharpening tools

It was suggested that the Security Council should have a serious discussion of how to use its tools more effectively and productively. The lack of exit strategies for

peacekeeping operations or sunset clauses for sanctions regimes made them less responsive to changing conditions and needs. Too often, the Council renewed mandates without taking sufficient account of conditions on the ground. Unrealistic, Christmas tree-like mandates were treated as templates and applied to new situations without recognition of differing circumstances. There was a growing sense of fatigue concerning peacekeeping, contended a participant, with mandate renewals receiving inadequate attention. For instance, the United Nations had deployed peacekeepers for decades in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but the Council had not assessed whether anything had been accomplished. More peacebuilding efforts were needed there and elsewhere, and the views of the local population had to be taken more fully into account. The members needed to engage with the new Secretary-General on an exercise of fresh thinking about such matters.

Agreeing that peacekeeping renewals had become routine, an interlocutor asserted that developments in South Sudan underscored the need to assign a higher priority to consultations related to peacekeeping. Ambassadors rarely attended either meetings with troop-contributing countries or sessions of the working group on peacekeeping operations. Basic issues, such as training and capacity, remained unmet challenges. It was not enough to just leave those matters to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Peacekeeping had been the best invention by the United Nations, replied another speaker, but it was in trouble and needed renewal.

Targeted sanctions, it was observed, could be a valuable tool for prevention, if applied in a timely and effective manner and aimed at the right individuals. A participant added that enhanced collaboration with regional arrangements could also improve the Security Council's record on conflict prevention. Yet, the Council had found it difficult to agree on a press statement about the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. Another interlocutor commented that prevention was itself a cross-cutting issue that could best draw on insights from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, some beyond the scope of traditional notions of security. In terms of bolstering efforts in respect of preventive diplomacy, a speaker called for the Council to engage more closely with regional organizations and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Security Council visits to areas of concern could be an effective tool of preventive diplomacy, declared a participant. An example was the upcoming trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Council visits to Mali, Somalia and South Sudan had been very helpful in providing an opportunity to see directly what was happening on the ground, added an interlocutor. The challenge, however, was to follow up more systematically once the members had returned to New York. Noting that the Council was about to undertake its fifth such trip in 2016, a participant concurred with the assertion about their value for raising awareness and for preventive diplomacy. However, there were questions about their costs and how to maximize their benefit. Follow-up had been a problem, as illustrated by the revealing trip to South Sudan that helped to foster a common understanding of the problems there but that was not the subject of any follow-up meetings of the whole Council.

A speaker agreed with those who had expressed concern about the decline in respect for international humanitarian law. There was a need to combat impunity in such situations and it would be helpful to have a paper from the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat about how that might be done. The deadlock in the Security Council in the face of the repeated commission of mass atrocities in the Syrian Arab Republic had frustrated both the public and Member States, commented another participant. The lack of agreement on effective action had brought the international community's "never again" commitment into question and given impetus to the effort to achieve restraint in the use of the veto in such situations.

According to an interlocutor, there could be no accountability unless the Council made progress on ending impunity.

The penholder system, it was claimed, had concentrated the core work of the Security Council in very few hands. The penholders largely determined what the Council would do or say. A speaker suggested that the penholder system could be modified, for instance by including an African member as co-penholder on situations in Africa. Such steps could usefully be explored in 2017. According to another interlocutor, a rebellion by the elected members had produced some modest reforms in how chairs of subsidiary bodies were selected, but there had been little progress on the more critical question of how penholders were chosen and operated. Too often, penholders were overly secretive and most members did not see draft resolutions in a timely manner.

It was asserted that Permanent Representatives were inadequately engaged in the work of the Security Council, relying too much on their political coordinators, including for the drafting and negotiating of resolutions. The latter were not in a position to go much beyond their national positions on such intensely political matters, while Permanent Representatives might have more leeway. In subsidiary bodies, Ambassadors rarely participated unless they were in the chair. A speaker responded that, when it came to having Permanent Representatives more involved in drafting, it was not clear whether the outcomes would be better or worse. It was rare, commented an interlocutor, for Permanent Representatives to meet in New York for substantive exchanges as they were doing at the workshop. It would be hard for them to devote the time required for detailed negotiations on draft language, which often depended on precedent and past texts. In the view of a participant, it would be useful for Permanent Representatives to provide more strategic and long-term perspectives to drafting negotiations. Detailed matters could be left to the experts.

Session II
Working methods and subsidiary bodies

Moderator

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Commentators

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The agenda for session II included the following questions:

- The selection process for the new Secretary-General had gone remarkably well, with a consensus choice emerging from the Security Council more readily than many observers had anticipated. Was the process facilitated or complicated by the innovations instituted in 2016 both in the nature of collaboration with the General Assembly and in the more rigorous and public scrutiny of the candidates? Would the choice have been different if the more closed procedures of the past had been followed? In the end, considerations of gender and geography appeared not to have been controlling. Why? What

lessons should be derived from the conduct of the process in 2016? Should further reforms in the process be considered in the future?

- The Charter gives the Secretary-General important responsibilities in terms of assisting and facilitating the work of the Security Council, and these have been expanded by practice over time. With a new Secretary-General taking office at the same time that the class of 2018 enters the Council, should any adjustments be considered in the way the Council and Secretary-General interact and support each other? For instance, there have been concerns expressed at recent workshops about the conduct of the Secretary-General's monthly luncheon for members of the Council. Are adjustments needed to make these opportunities less formal, more interactive and more productive?

- In 2016, the election of new members of the Security Council was undertaken earlier than in the past, in part to provide them a longer period to prepare for their new responsibilities. Do the newly elected members feel that this extended transition period has, in fact, given them more opportunities to observe how the Council works and to learn what their membership will entail? Are further efforts needed in this regard?

- In recent years, two of the more prominent concerns expressed at the workshops have been about how the chairs of the subsidiary organs have been selected and how support has been provided to them in terms of their preparations to undertake these new responsibilities. In 2016, two notes by the President of the Security Council (S/2016/170 of 22 February 2016 and S/2016/619 of 15 July 2016) sought to address these matters. Have the measures and processes laid out in these notes been fully and consistently implemented? Have they resulted in a more interactive, consultative and transparent process, particularly in terms of the selection of chairs of subsidiary organs? Are further improvements needed?

- Another topic that has received extensive attention at recent workshops has been how the informal practice of some members exercising the role of penholder on certain issues has developed and been practiced. There has been both praise for the critical work undertaken by the penholders and calls for broadening the participation of additional members in this process. The possibility of co-penholders on some issues, particularly those in which additional regional expertise would be helpful, has been raised. In 2016, non-permanent members have taken the lead on some issues. What advice should newly elected members receive on this question? Should this matter receive further attention in debates about working methods reform within the Council or are current practices working as well as could be expected? In general, has there been sufficient collaboration between penholders and the chairs of related subsidiary organs?

- A letter dated 1 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Japan, introducing the open debate on working methods, suggested that it would be an opportunity for the Council, with the participation of interested delegations from the wider membership, to look at the implementation of the note by the President contained in document S/2010/507 and other relevant notes to identify successful practices as well as possible shortcomings, and consider making necessary adjustments. In that regard, what points stand out from the open debate and what follow-up steps might be considered?

- It has been widely recognized at past workshops that the Council has been among the most adaptable organs in the United Nations system in terms of adopting improvements in its working methods. At this point, which implementation steps or additional areas should receive priority attention? For

instance, despite repeated expressions of concern at past workshops, consultations are said to remain insufficiently informal and interactive. Why has it been so difficult to make improvements in this area and are further steps possible in this direction?

- In recent years, new or modified meeting formats appear to be providing the Council with greater flexibility for considering a wider range of issues and getting broader input to the Council's deliberations. Are informal interactive dialogues and Arria formula meetings being used appropriately and effectively? Have consultations with troop-contributing and police-contributing countries been employed as effectively as possible?

- On the other hand, there have been numerous comments at recent workshops about the limited utility of and the amount of time consumed by open debates, particularly on thematic issues, when there is inadequate follow-up. Could there be ways of organizing and conducting them that would be more efficient and effective?

- According to the Highlights of Security Council Practice 2015, there were 12 high-level meetings in 2015, or an average of one per month. Is that a pace the Council should seek to sustain? Which kinds of topics benefit from such high-level attention by the Council and which could be better addressed by other formats?

- At the last workshop, there was discussion of the possible utility of making wider use of the agenda item "Any other business." Since then, this has, in fact, become a more common practice. What have been the effects of this evolving practice and where has it made a positive difference? Are there any potential downsides?

- Note S/2016/170 of 22 February 2016 proposed a number of measures for enhancing the transparency of the Council's subsidiary organs. To what extent have these steps been implemented? Where is further progress needed? The note also encouraged steps to improve interactivity and coordination among subsidiary bodies and between them and the Council as a whole. Are further steps needed in this area?

- At some recent workshops, concerns have been expressed about the difficulty the Council sometimes experiences in trying to exercise effective oversight over the implementation of peacekeeping operations, sanctions regimes and enforcement operations it has authorized. Has enhanced reporting from Force Commanders and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, more frequent Council missions to the field and improved procedures for sanctions committees eased this concern? Are other steps to enhance periodic reviews of ongoing operations and sanctions regimes needed?

Assessment of and prospects for change

The experience with instituting changes in Security Council working methods, it was said, had been that much was possible just through the members taking the initiative, since none of that required Charter amendment. Examples cited of "just doing it" included the monthly breakfasts among Permanent Representatives, interactive wrap-up meetings, speaking in the chamber before moving to consultations and the expanded use of "Other matters" (also known as "Any other business") on the agenda. According to several speakers, the annual "Hitting the ground running" workshops had been instrumental in identifying areas for change and in reviewing how much they had been able to accomplish on their own initiative. In the view of a speaker, outside of the Council, everyone criticized its

working methods, but once one joined the Council and saw it from the inside, things looked different and one came to recognize how much had been accomplished in that regard. The impression became much more positive.

Although the background paper by Mr. Luck had asserted that permanent members tended to be less enthusiastic about changing working methods than non-permanent ones, a participant responded that that was not always the case. There had been a number of improvements in working methods in recent years, some suggested by permanent and others by non-permanent members. The chairs of sanctions committees had been making visits that clarified perceptions and expectations. Regional stakeholders had been invited to meet with the members of sanctions committees, which had aided implementation. Transparency had been aided by the growing number of public meetings and press statements following committee meetings, yet it was important to retain a balance in that regard. Committee meetings needed to be conducted in private.

A participant asserted that it was true that permanent members tended to be more optimistic about the progress that had been made on working methods reform, while non-permanent members were less positive about what had been accomplished. In the view of another speaker, there were too many rituals in the practices of the Security Council, which were hard for new members to understand or to change. According to an interlocutor, there had been resistance to an idea for a new agenda item proposed by their delegation and it required convening an Arria meeting to educate Council members and to overcome the resistance. In response, a speaker agreed that the Council needed to be more open-minded about fresh ideas, whether they concerned the agenda or working methods. The trend was moving in that direction, in any case.

Two participants commented that the early election of new members had been a productive step forward, given that it allowed them more time to prepare properly before joining the Security Council. It had been useful, mentioned another interlocutor, to have them sitting in meetings to get a better sense of how the Council and its subsidiary bodies worked. According to an interlocutor, it was time to codify some of the innovations in working methods as part of the ongoing effort to rationalize the practices of the Council. A speaker suggested that an update to the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) might be in order and that the Council might take into account the views expressed in the open debate on working methods. It was pointed out that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions continued to address such matters on an ongoing basis.

A speaker identified the modifications to the selection process for the new Secretary-General as another significant innovation. Although it was important to respect the Charter provisions in that regard, the institution of informal dialogues had produced some significant conversations with the candidates. The question of how to communicate the results of straw polls did require more thought, however, as had been noted in session I. Concurring that the informal dialogue with candidates had been useful, an interlocutor suggested that the practice should be included in the Council's provisional rules of procedure. The effort to keep the results of the straw polls secret, however, spoke to the almost instinctive preference by members of the Council for secrecy. That had damaged the Council's standing and undermined its credibility. Although not everyone would agree, it was time to formalize the new process through a decision by the Council. To one participant, the selection of the new Secretary-General and the Colombian peace process had been highlights of 2016, but much of the rest had been marred by political confrontations. In the view of an interlocutor, the working methods of the Council should be developed in a manner that would facilitate conflict prevention as a core purpose of the Council's work.

Meetings and consultations

Meetings were too frequent and too long, it was said, a practice that would be unsustainable in the private sector. The Security Council needed to be more efficient and to make better use of time. A speaker called for shorter meetings with better briefers. Agreeing that meetings should be less time-consuming and that the quality of briefers had been uneven, a participant called for action-oriented meetings that were convened only when necessary. The Council should meet only when it had to. In the view of an interlocutor, time limits on interventions would help and speakers should not repeat points already made by the briefers. Comments should be substantive and focused on possible outcomes. A participant noted that it did not take long for a new member to recognize that the Council was inefficient in the way it conducted meetings. The goal, asserted another speaker, was to make the Council both more efficient and more transparent.

It was pointed out that time issues would be even more acute if the Security Council was enlarged, so inefficiencies should be addressed at this point. Perhaps working groups or drafting groups could help to facilitate progress on specific issues. A participant concurred on the need for greater efficiency and streamlining, for instance by combining sanctions and country-specific discussions, keeping meetings short, reviewing reporting cycles and only holding meetings if something was happening. Shorter was better, noted another speaker, yet members had a tendency to overestimate the power of the spoken word.

It was asserted that there were too many open debates with excessively long statements. When non-permanent members served as President, they had understandably seen it as a legacy issue, but it had led to the overly frequent convening of open debates. A participant asked about the value of open debates, given that negotiations within the Security Council were usually undertaken beforehand without taking into account the views that would subsequently be expressed in the open debates. Questioning the utility of open debates, a speaker pointed out that Permanent Representatives from the Council rarely attended, so the messaging purpose was not well served. There were, moreover, far too many of them, sometimes two in a single month. Despite those concerns, an interlocutor suggested that open debates did serve as a means of making connections between the Council and the General Assembly.

A participant cited several ways that consultations could be improved. Briefers should be encouraged to be succinct and to focus on the key questions, something which the President should ask them in advance to do. In selecting briefers, protocol should not always be followed if there were lower-ranking officials with more direct and relevant experience on the ground. Also, the use of the two-finger rule had the effect of making consultations more interactive and productive. In general, noted a speaker, there tended to be too many briefers and they tended to speak at too great a length. Another interlocutor contended, however, that there were not enough briefers with independent perspectives, for example from academia or civil society.

A speaker remarked that consultations had largely become a recital of written statements, which often repeated what the briefers had already said. The two-finger rule was not employed often, but it offered the promise of making consultations more interactive and more substantive. Transparency would be enhanced if the members stayed in the chamber after being briefed rather than retiring to the smaller consultation room. A participant underscored that Security Council consultations should not be treated as a courtroom in which a statement was made and then the witness departed. It was shocking that speakers did not stay to listen to others, given that consultations were meant to be interactive. According to another interlocutor,

that unfortunate practice had developed because statements in consultations were so often repetitive.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if briefers from the Secretariat could update the material they were presenting and if they could provide visual materials to support their oral presentations, where appropriate. A participant, noting that statements in consultations tended to be repetitious, proposed use of the "Toledo formula" by which Deputy Permanent Representatives would meet at the beginning of each month to sort out which delegations would want to speak on which subjects and then to consider a division of labour in which there could be joint statements so that each delegation did not have to speak to every item. An interlocutor responded that it would have been helpful to have employed the Toledo formula more often, but that it had to be recognized that delegations were often compelled to make statements on certain issues even if others had already said similar things.

One way of encouraging more interactivity in consultations, it was suggested, would be to have the President set out an annotated agenda, perhaps with the identification of the three most pressing issues to be addressed. In the view of a speaker, improving consultations would require a more disciplined approach by members, not just changes in working methods. It was essential to remain action-oriented, instead of focusing on interesting analysis and descriptive presentations. A participant noted that the overall goal should be to make consultations more informal and more interactive. The bottom line, underscored a speaker, was that the members needed to make more of an effort to listen to each other. The more one listened, the more one learned and the more interesting the deliberations became. The more one put into consultations, the more one would get out of them. Yes, concurred an interlocutor, the members did not listen to each other enough. That was why the workshop was so valuable: it was one time when members actually listened to each other. Another participant agreed on the need to listen more.

Horizon scanning meetings, it was said, had proved helpful when convened when they were most needed. If they were automatically put on the agenda every month, however, they would become routine and stale, ultimately losing their purpose. A participant commented that it was useful to have more frequent horizon scanning meetings, but that they could be enhanced by the use of more visual supports. The momentum behind the convening of horizon scanning sessions should be maintained, according to an interlocutor. According to a speaker, horizon scanning meetings could be quite useful in getting a sense of what was looming on the horizon.

A speaker noted that the background paper by Mr. Luck had mentioned that it had been agreed at the previous year's workshop to use "Any other business" more frequently than in the past and that seemed to be happening. There had been, for instance, a discussion on current developments in Iraq that had led to quick agreement on a press statement without instructions from capitals. Concurring that the discussion on Iraq had been useful and that the use of "Any other business" could be productive, a participant also pointed out that the "Any other business" procedure had been overused in other cases to keep talking about the same item without putting it on the agenda. An interlocutor commented that "Any other business" discussions, whether or not one was pleased to see the issue addressed, were always valid and interesting exchanges. The expanded use of "Any other business" in 2016, in the view of a speaker, had been a useful development in terms of facilitating the work of the Security Council and had been a direct result of the 2015 workshop.

Process, procedure and practice

On the question of penholders, it was argued that they should be more flexible and inclusive from the outset of the process. The current pattern, in which a very limited group of members got to see early drafts that were then shared with a somewhat larger group before the whole Council membership, should be avoided. A less formal system would be preferable. An interlocutor agreed that it would be very helpful to have drafts circulated more widely at an earlier point in the process. When time permitted, it would be helpful to hold informal consultations on draft decisions. A speaker suggested that it would be a step forward to make more use of a system of co-penholders, especially on situations in Africa and other places where regional expertise could be helpful. That rule could also apply to the Middle East, noted another participant. The idea of co-penholders was very interesting and worth further follow-up.

There was nothing to prevent members from seizing the pen on any given subject, it was said. Penholders generally tried to be inclusive, because the diversity of views could yield fresh insights and a better result. There had been several recent situations in which non-permanent members had been successful penholders. A participant asked whether it was always true that penholders would welcome either co-penholders or other members offering language at any point. If so, that would be a very important step in the right direction. According to an interlocutor, the penholder system could be more equitable and democratic. Establishing co-penholders had worked in some situations and should be encouraged. A speaker spoke of a positive experience with a co-penholder in 2016 on a high-profile draft resolution, even though the effort did not ultimately succeed. Commenting that the penholder question was very sensitive, an interlocutor contended that having a single penholder made the work of the Council more efficient, if less legitimate in the eyes of some. Always requiring a co-penholder would make the Council less efficient, if more representative. The key, overall, would be for each penholder to exercise that role as inclusively as possible.

Noting that the question of the selection of chairs of subsidiary bodies had been mentioned in the background materials for the workshop as a continuing concern and that two notes by the President of the Security Council (S/2016/170 and S/2016/619) had addressed the issue, a participant suggested that there had been some progress in carrying out those guidelines, but that more work was needed. The Council had not met its target of allocating chairmanships by early October, but the consultative process had been more interactive than in the past. It would be helpful to have an explanation from the President about the reasons for the choices. A speaker noted that confirmation of their chairmanship of a working group did not come until the end of December. Given that elections to the Council had been moved to June, an interlocutor questioned why it took until the end of October to be notified of chairmanships. However, it was recognized that that represented a substantial improvement from earlier years and that the facilitators had made a real effort to improve the process in 2016. Although there was room for improvement, a participant commented that the earlier appointment had provided a chance to get to know the work of the subsidiary bodies better. Owing to the good work of the facilitators, the process of selection had been interactive. Expressing appreciation for the efforts of the facilitators, another interlocutor said that the process had been satisfactory.

More attention, it was suggested, should be given to how the meetings of subsidiary bodies were organized. It had proved necessary to organize a wide range of meeting formats, including formal meetings, informal meetings and informal informals. The latter offered an opportunity to invite experts from civil society and

academia who had information and perspectives of interest to the members. A participant suggested that an innovation of having a joint meeting of a thematic working group and a sanctions committee had been productive, although some members had raised principled objections. Both bodies had faced similar concerns about potential sanctions designations.

Those who chaired sanctions committees, it was said, needed to be concerned with their humanitarian impact and reports and analyses from the Secretariat and agencies on such matters would be valued. More consultations with the relevant penholders would also be helpful. According to a participant, the consensus rule had undermined the potential of sanctions committees, as well as other subsidiary bodies, to make progress. Political issues had often been obstacles to their work. Participation in their work, other than by the chairs, had been largely limited to experts, making it insufficiently integrated with the wider work of the Security Council. Although confidentiality was sometimes needed, sanctions committees could take steps towards greater transparency, for instance through open briefings, consultations with countries involved and the publication of some documents. More broadly, a speaker contended that there had been occasions, for instance in relation to Western Sahara, when documents were shared with the permanent members but not the other members. That was a counterproductive practice.

Referring to the statement by the Secretary-General at the opening dinner about the requirement that every press statement and presidential statement reflect a full consensus, a speaker concurred with that concern. Press statements tended to be too long and were released too frequently. According to an interlocutor, presidential statements and press statements tended to get little attention, in part because of the cumbersome process of gaining full unanimity that tended to make the language convoluted and the timing too tardy. To improve the Council's messaging, the point by the Secretary-General was well taken. In the view of another speaker, the problem was not with the goal of consensus for presidential statements and press statements, but with the fact that more time needed to be allocated to producing one. With time, the chances of their being action- oriented would grow. An interlocutor agreed with the goal of consensus in most cases, although it had been a problem in addressing Western Sahara.

Although visits by the Security Council to areas of concern could have important benefits, it was noted that it had not always been easy to get them off the ground given lack of consensus among Council members or reluctance on the part of the host countries. Was the decision to go on such a trip a procedural or non-procedural one? Was a vote necessary? In the view of a speaker, such visits were particularly helpful before key decisions were taken about the situation, given that the members would be better informed afterwards. When the members travelled together and then came to a decision together, it would have the effect of strengthening their sense of common purpose and their mutual understanding of the situation. Another participant underscored the value of such trips and regretted that some had not been undertaken because of the lack of unanimity. Those questions should be treated as procedural matters that did not require unanimity.

All members, it was pointed out, had to be concerned about relationships among capitals, Permanent Representatives, Deputy Permanent Representatives, political coordinators and experts. What was the optimum division of labour in the case of each member? In the view of a participant, the triple-track approach employed at the European Union in Brussels could be useful at the United Nations as well. Under that approach, delegations decided in advance which issues should be pursued at which level: Permanent Representative; Deputy Permanent Representative; or political coordinator/expert. A participant endorsed the approach as it had been practised at the European Union. As another interlocutor pointed out,

the division of labour would vary from mission to mission depending on their substantive priorities, but it was in principle a good idea. Meetings to change direction on an issue or to adopt a new strategy should be attended by Permanent Representatives, and their exclusive breakfast meetings had proved quite productive and should be continued. An interlocutor called this triple-track approach intriguing. A speaker suggested that more drafting should be done by Permanent Representatives and during consultations. In the view of another participant, Permanent Representatives should be more engaged at the strategic level, especially when it came to outcomes, although that should not necessarily extend to drafting. Political coordinators and experts, it seemed, had more fun.

A participant asked that references to Security Council decisions and Secretariat documents include mention of the subject and not just the United Nations document number. According to a speaker, certain rituals, such as giving gifts when a new President of the Council took over or declaring that the monthly lunch was in honour of the Secretary-General, were outmoded and counterproductive when those occasions should be seen just as part of normal Council working methods. An interlocutor noted that there seemed to be agreement on those points. The luncheons should just be called monthly working lunches. There remained some unresolved matters relating to rules and procedures, such as decision-making rules on presidential statements and undertaking trips. However, there was broad agreement on many other points, and members should just take those steps without seeking further approval.

Partners and outreach

It was asserted that greater effort should be made to reach out to the General Assembly and to political groups, such as the Group of 77 and regional groups. That could help to improve relationships, as well as avoid perceptions of encroachment. A speaker questioned the utility of monthly assessments of the work of the Security Council, wondering if anyone read them. Were they worth the time and effort that went into preparing them? There had been significant improvements in the annual report to the General Assembly, however, which was required by the Charter. The Council was not a club, an interlocutor emphasized, and there should be greater openness to working with the Assembly and other interested parties, as each organ had its own set of competencies. There was a need to strike a balance among the interests of the Council, those of the Assembly and those of the constituencies that elected the members, a speaker noted. Arria formula meetings could be employed to address those larger issues. A participant pointed out that it could be helpful to have representatives of regional organizations or the Permanent Representatives who were serving as chairs of country configurations in the Peacebuilding Commission participate in relevant consultations from time to time.

A participant suggested that one reason to engage with regional organizations was to avoid overlap. At times, it seemed like Security Council members were completely ignorant of the activities of other organizations. The Council could go further to engage regional arrangements, a speaker asserted, including in providing support for their efforts to prevent and resolve conflict. According to a participant, with greater mutual effort, productive coordination with the European Union could be achieved. In the view of an interlocutor, more creative and informal ways could be found to get messages to regional actors, for instance through a conversation by the President with a key Permanent Representative, delivery of a demarche, or an interactive dialogue. It did not have to involve summoning a country to the Council. A speaker related how a working group had reached out to affected countries, allowing them to participate in some meetings and comment on some drafts.

To call on parties to do this or that, it was said, without having them in the room or having any follow-up mechanism was just posturing. The Security Council needed to do a better job of coordination in such cases, clarifying who would conduct which follow-up steps, such as delivering demarches on behalf of the Council. According to an interlocutor, the Council needed to talk to and listen to countries involved in situations of concern. The President of the Council should call on some of those Permanent Representatives to convey the Council's concerns and, in some cases, allow them to participate in consultations. Yes, agreed a participant, the Council needed to speak more and engage more with countries on its agenda. Another speaker noted the value of encouraging countries facing sanctions to interact with members of the Council.

The Secretariat, it was asserted, should be able to approach the President at any point that they saw an issue of importance brewing. More engagement with the Secretary-General was to be welcomed. More white papers from the Department of Political Affairs or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would be useful, especially on places where not everybody had an embassy. Time should be found, asserted an interlocutor, for a proper discussion of the report by the High-level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations on the future of peace operations. A participant suggested that it might be productive to have an interactive and informal exchange with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon before he left office, in order to draw on his expertise and experience, including in dealing with the Council.

In the view of a speaker, the Security Council was like the United Nations legislative body and the Secretariat was its executive branch. Therefore, the Secretariat should be action- oriented and focused on helping to carry out the decisions of the Council. It was, in that regard, always useful when the Secretariat raised matters with the Council in the spirit of Article 99 of the Charter. Concurring, an interlocutor stated that the Secretary-General should always be welcome to interact with the Council. That should happen on a more regular basis. The Secretariat should feel free to tell the members what they needed to hear, even if it was not what they wanted to hear. When the Council was addressing peace operations, the briefings should not always be dominated by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, given that there were other aspects of those situations, such as peacebuilding or political considerations, that involved the organization as a whole. A speaker commented that the Council's direct engagement with Special Representatives of the Secretary-General was sometimes disappointing, so it was sometimes necessary to arrange less formal interactions at national missions, given that all members of the Council did not necessarily have an equal interest in all situations.

Session III
Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2016

Moderator

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Commentators

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Challenges and opportunities

For one Member State, the primary reasons to join the Security Council were to demonstrate its readiness to contribute to the collective responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to showcase the contributions that an emerging economy could make to a wide range of United Nations objectives, and to pursue a specific set of policy priorities and principles. Among the peace and security goals they sought were finding non-military solutions to a series of conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, addressing terrorist threats, seeking new approaches to climate change and the threats faced by small island developing countries and advancing non-proliferation and disarmament.

A speaker stressed that non-permanent members had limited powers within the Security Council, which was organized to preserve the status quo. Chairing a sanctions committee was frustrating but important work. Informal meeting formats offered opportunities to keep attention on issues, such as those related to the Middle East or Western Sahara, which some major powers would like to keep off the agenda. For all its frustrations, serving on the Council was an exciting and, on balance, pleasurable experience.

A speaker commented that the engagement of the Security Council with issues tended to be periodic and superficial rather than systematic. Often, there was no larger strategy to provide guidance and a sense of direction. Generally, the substantive input and analysis provided by the Secretariat was inadequate. Fresh thinking was often lacking. According to a participant, more attention needed to be paid to negotiating mandates for peace operations. The so-called Christmas tree effect needed to be avoided. That was an area in which fresh strategic thinking was called for. It was worrisome when the five permanent members were divided, but such situations sometimes had also provided unexpected opportunities for non-permanent members to try to make a difference. When the five were united, however, there was usually little room for the elected members to affect outcomes.

Noting that life in the Security Council could be quite frustrating for its elected members, a participant asked what they could do to be more effective. Was there a place for a Movement of Non-Aligned Countries caucus within the Council? How could relations between the elected and permanent members be improved? It was pointed out that most issues, other than a few related to working methods, did not break down along permanent/non-permanent lines. There was diversity among both the 10 members and the 5 members on most matters. In the view of a speaker, the fundamental goal of all members should be to seek and push for unity within the Council. To that end, the elected members could play an essential role in helping the permanent members to overcome their differences.

A speaker pointed out that Security Council Report had been established both to enhance transparency and accountability in the work of the Council and to help all 15 members to be as effective and productive as possible. Incoming, as well as current, members of the Council regularly made extensive use of its services. The Security Council Affairs Division, it was emphasized, provided a wide range of information and technical advice to all 15 members on a regular and ongoing basis. Several references were made to upcoming events to assist incoming members in preparing to join the Council.

A speaker noted that a major accomplishment during their time on the Security Council was the increased attention given to building bridges and to bolstering the mediation capacity of the United Nations. A second area of forward movement was on the reform of Council working methods, as reflected in efforts to review and update the note by the President S/2010/507, in the renovated process to select the new Secretary-General, and in continuing efforts to enhance transparency and inclusivity. According to a participant, the addition of monthly breakfasts to facilitate informal conversation among the 15 Permanent Representatives had been a useful innovation. Also, there had been encouragement on the part of some permanent members for some non-permanent members to take the pen on a sensitive issue. That opportunity was much appreciated, although it entailed significant responsibilities and substantial work. According to an interlocutor, there had been a series of initiatives on working methods over the past two years. They represented progress even as they highlighted how much further work was needed. Many of the steps requiring further consideration had been identified at the current workshop, as well as a few that could be implemented right away.

Lessons learned

The participants provided many pieces of advice to the newly elected members based on the lessons that they had learned from their time in the Security Council, including the following:

- Focus from the outset on preparedness and internal cohesion. Elected members should use the extended time now provided them to get organized and to test out various configurations, scenarios and protocols.
- Before joining the Council, engage bilaterally as much as possible with serving members of the Council. There was much to learn from them.
- Keep close connections with capitals and ministers. Get their buy-in, manage expectations and clarify priorities. Build your team; you are going to need them. Give them some time off. Make the best possible use of your Deputy Permanent Representatives. If your team does well, you will do well.
- In terms of the penholder system, the question was not who held the pen but how they held it. The emphasis always seemed to be on retaining agreed language, so look for opportunities to support fresh language that might offer new possibilities for dealing with deadlocked situations.
- Take the pen when you have the chance to move an issue forward. It is a big responsibility and a lot of work, but a chance to make a difference.
- When the permanent members are divided, there may be opportunities to claim some middle ground. Look for them.
- Smaller countries can, and should, retain their independent voices.
- The Council had its heart in the right place when it came to prevention, but it had been too tentative, so elected members should help push it in the right direction.
- Do not forget one's accountability to the whole United Nations membership, for instance by insisting that the briefings on the note of the President S/2010/507 be held as formal wrap-up sessions with meeting records rather than as informal briefings.
- The Council was a big family, so expect, when the time approaches to depart the Council, to miss those close relationships that had been built around two years of intensive shared activity.

- Non-permanent members need to struggle to find ways of making their voices heard. Seize the opportunity offered by the presidency, especially for holding high-visibility debates on selected topics. Also, make the best use of informal formats, such as Arria formula meetings, informal interactive dialogues, and "Any other business" sessions.
- Continue to innovate; changing Council working methods came slowly but was possible, step by step.
- Serving on the Council was very hard work, but a very valuable professional experience. Stay at it.
- Do not blame the Council for all of the world's ills. Instead, focus on making a difference.
- Look for ways to get Permanent Representatives more involved in the day-to-day work of the Council. Ad hoc, off-site gatherings can help to move agendas forward and build constituencies inside and outside the Council.
- Encourage the convening of situational awareness sessions. Push the Secretariat to provide more integrated information and to break down institutional silos. Look for non-scripted opportunities whenever possible.
- Engage with troop-contributing and police-contributing countries and regional players, but only on targeted situations, given time constraints.
- Be patient when advocating new ideas. They take time to mature. Stay with them.
- Recognize that it takes 15 effective members to make the Council effective. Work together to get the most out of everyone. Each member brings and contributes something different.
- Coalitions within the Council tend to shift from issue to issue, usually not along P-5 versus E10 lines. Look for support from across the Council.
- Look to current and outgoing members for guidance and advice, especially on how to get things done. Their experience is invaluable. Learn from the class of 2016.

A participant offered a personal list of 10 lessons for incoming members, as follows:

- One, never request instructions about how to cast informal meetings. You do not want to be tied to someone else's script.
- Two, establish your priorities for your two-year term. Prepare three months in advance for your presidency, but do not stake everything on it or your team will get bored the rest of the year. Strike a happy balance in that regard.
- Three, forget your ego. Often it is your expert who needs to maintain the critical contacts on the ground.
- Four, stop running and think. At times, reflection and thinking out of the box are the most valuable commodities.
- Five, work to maintain your regional constituencies. Try to keep care of your friends.
- Six, keep your political coordinators healthy and have a replacement on hand if necessary. They work very hard, as do your experts, and they are essential.
- Seven, try to avoid becoming hostage to your sanctions committee and to your experts, who will give you detailed technical reports to present to the Council

that you cannot possibly understand. Instead, submit a written report and give the Council your own views orally.

- Eight, innovate, for instance by having breakfasts for delegations with a humanitarian orientation whether or not they are on the Council.

- Nine, develop a close working relationship with the Security Council Affairs Division, given that they are very good and you will need their help in preparing your presidency.

- Ten, do not panic. Get a shrink.

Following the conclusion of session III, closing remarks were made by Ambassador Fodé Seck, President of the Security Council, Ambassador Kai Sauer, Permanent Representative of Finland, and Edward C. Luck of Columbia University.

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Letter dated 30 May 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-fourth monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 April to 22 May 2017.

There has been no change with regard to the destruction of the remaining aircraft hangar or the ability of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to confirm the condition of two above-ground stationary facilities. In his note to the OPCW Executive Council, the Director General indicates that this lack of change is due to the security situation, which precludes safe access to all three sites.

I take note of the Director General's statement that the documents requested by OPCW to help to clarify some of the outstanding issues related to the declaration made by the Syrian Arab Republic have now been received. I further note that high-level consultations on this matter will resume, although the precise timeline is still under consideration.

The clarification and resolution of the outstanding issues related to the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic are essential and the anticipated resumption of the high-level consultations would be a welcome development. The international community must have confidence that the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic has been fully eliminated. I strongly encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with OPCW in this regard.

The OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing its work. On 4 May 2017, I transmitted to the members of the Security Council the report of the mission regarding the incident that occurred on 16 September 2016, which involved allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Umm Hawsh (S/2017/400, annex). The report indicated that two women reported to have been killed in the alleged incident had been exposed to sulfur mustard. The mission also received a mortar reported to be connected to the alleged incident and found that it contained sulfur mustard.

The mission is also continuing its investigation of allegations concerning the use of chemical weapons in the Khan Shaykhun area in southern Idlib on 4 April 2017. On 18 May 2017, I transmitted to the members of the Security Council a status update of the mission regarding the reported incident (S/2017/440, annex). The update outlined the activities of the mission in that regard, including with respect to the collection of biomedical, biological-environmental and environmental samples, all of which indicated exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance.

Please recycle

The findings in both of the above-mentioned reports once again leave me with the deepest concern regarding not only the unjustifiable use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, but also the effect of such use on the confidence of the international community in its non-proliferation architecture. I call upon all those involved in the use of such weapons to immediately cease those actions. The effect on the Syrian people is wholly unacceptable, while the global consequences of the eroded international norm against those weapons are far-reaching.

Following an assessment of the report of the fact-finding mission regarding the incident in Umm Hawsh, I note that the investigative team of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has been instructed to finalize its plans to conduct an in-depth investigation. The Mechanism is also reviewing the status update of the mission on the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun.

I am pleased to inform you that, further to my announcement on 27 April 2017, Edmond Mulet (Guatemala) assumed the post of the head of the independent three-member panel to lead the Joint Investigative Mechanism, effective 2 May 2017. I am confident in his abilities to ensure independence and impartiality in the work of the Mechanism.

The work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is of critical importance. I again call upon all States to support both the fact-finding mission and the Mechanism.

As previously determined by the Security Council, the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security and is a serious violation of international law. I hope that the Security Council will come together to ensure that such weapons are never used again.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 April to 22 May 2017 and fulfils the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director General Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-fourth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 April 2017 to 22 May 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The security situation still continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 16 May 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-second monthly report (EC-85/P/NAT.3, dated 16 May 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. As reported previously, an invitation was sent to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, and his delegation to resume high-level consultations to address the unresolved issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. In preparation for these consultations, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted on 18 May 2017, at the request of the Secretariat, additional documents and information intended to help clarify some of the outstanding issues concerning its initial declaration and subsequent submissions. This material is being translated and will be analysed by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and discussed with the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic during the forthcoming talks, the precise timeline for which is still under consideration. The Director-General will report to the Council on the outcome of the consultations.

9. In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the first inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre took place from 26 February to 5 March 2017. As reported previously, samples were taken by the inspection team and were sent to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis. The Secretariat has now received the analysis results and completed the inspection reports.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

10. An amendment to the tripartite agreement between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, and an amendment to the contribution agreement between the OPCW and UNOPS were finalised and have been signed by the Director-General and UNOPS' Director for the Middle East Region. The amendment to the contribution agreement is now in force. This signed amendment to the tripartite agreement has been subsequently delivered to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for the third and final signature, which is expected shortly. These amendments will extend until the end of December 2017 the support provided by UNOPS to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab

Republic, and ensure that the necessary administrative and logistical support is provided to the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

11. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, four OPCW staff members were deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, for the purpose of annual routine maintenance of the remote monitoring systems installed at four destroyed underground structures.

Supplementary resources

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 9.7 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

14. During the period under review, the FFM continued its work regarding the allegations of use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of over 80 people, including children, and injuries to hundreds of others. A Note entitled "Status Update of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding a Reported Incident in Khan Shaykhun, 4 April 2017" (S/1497/2017, dated 12 May 2017) was issued by the Secretariat to summarise the activities conducted by the FFM so far.

15. As reported previously, the results of the analyses of biomedical samples collected from three victims at autopsy and from seven individuals undergoing treatment at different hospitals indicated exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance. Results of the analyses of biological-environmental samples (birds) and environmental samples (soil and vegetation) collected by witnesses and/or representatives of non-governmental organisations also indicated exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance.

16. As mentioned in Note S/1497/2017, planning is under way in liaison with the United Nations regarding a possible visit to the alleged site of the incident at Khan Shaykhun. In this regard, the Director-General addressed a letter to the United Nations Secretary General on 29 April 2017 requesting the logistical and security support of the United Nations, in accordance with relevant existing arrangements, for the deployment of an FFM team to Khan Shaykhun as early as possible. The assistance requested includes the engagement of personnel who can effectively liaise and negotiate with armed opposition groups in the area in order to guarantee safe and secure access to the FFM team. On 4 May 2017, the United Nations Secretary General replied to the Director-General's letter and formally confirmed that the United Nations would provide support with the obtainment of necessary security clearances and other logistical arrangements. A representative from the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy to Syria has been appointed to assist the FFM in operational planning.

17. On 29 April 2017, the Secretariat also addressed a note verbale to the Syrian Arab Republic requesting the Syrian Government's assistance and cooperation for the safe and effective deployment of an FFM team to Khan Shaykhun. H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, in a letter dated 8 May 2017, confirmed that the Syrian Arab Republic would provide support to the team to ensure its safety on Syrian Government-controlled territory. Two notes verbales were subsequently sent to the Syrian Arab Republic on 12 and 15 May 2017, in preparation for the deployment of the FFM team to Khan Shaykhun.

18. On 9 May 2017, at the request of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretariat made available to all States Parties two notes verbales dated 8 May 2017, transmitting information on cases of alleged transport and use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic. Another note verbale (dated 16 May 2017) was circulated on 17 May 2017.

19. With regard to the investigation of the allegations of use of chemical weapons at Um-Housh in September 2016, a Note by the Secretariat entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of 16 September 2016 as Reported in the Note Verbale of the Syrian Arab Republic Number 113 Dated 29 November 2016" (S/1491/2017, dated 1 May 2017) has been submitted for the consideration of States Parties, and was also forwarded to the JIM. In the report, the FFM confirmed that the two female casualties reported to have been involved in the incident in Um-Housh had been exposed to sulfur mustard. Furthermore, the FFM has determined that the mortar, which was handed over by the experts of the Russian Federation's chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence team to the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic and was reported to be connected to the described incident in Um-Housh on 16 September 2016, was a munition containing sulfur mustard.

20. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM has continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Conclusion

21. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.

United Nations S/2017/470

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 June 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 31 May 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya (see annex). The report, dated 24 May 2017, covers the period from 23 April to 22 May 2017.

The report was prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision (EC-M-52/DEC.1) of 20 July 2016 and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016), for transmission to the Security Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Antonio **Guterres**

17-08897 (E) 050617

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya" prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-52/DEC.1, of 20 July 2016, and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016), for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 April to 22 May 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-52/DEC.2, of 27 July 2016, and EC-M-53/DEC.1, of 26 August 2016.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya

1. At its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") adopted a decision on the "Destruction of Libya's Remaining Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.1, dated 20 July 2016) and requested the Director-General to assist Libya in developing a modified plan of destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons. On 22 July 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2298 (2016), welcoming and endorsing the decision by the Council and requesting the Director-General, through the Secretary-General, to report to the Security Council on a regular basis until the destruction is complete and verified.

2. At the conclusion of its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Council adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Libya's Remaining Category 2 Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.2, dated 27 July 2016). In operative paragraph 17 of that decision, the Council requested the Director-General to report to the Council on a monthly basis on the implementation of the decision. This ninth monthly report covers the period from 23 April to 22 May 2017.

Progress in the elimination of Libyan chemical weapons by the State Party hosting destruction activities

3. Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltlasten mbH (GEKA mbH), the designated destruction facility at Munster, Germany, completed the destruction of the 2-chloroethanol and tributylamine on 17 December 2016 and 20 January 2017 respectively.

4. As previously reported (EC-85/DG.1, dated 23 March 2017), the destruction of phosphorous trichloride was suspended as a necessary precaution in order to prevent the refractory coating from severe damage. Destruction totals for phosphorous trichloride remain at 3.2 metric tonnes (MT), or 2.8%.

5. Using the incinerator in Incinerator Plant 1 ("Munster 1"), GEKA mbH began the destruction of thionylchloride on 24 March 2017. Feed rates into the incinerator are low, so as to avoid damage to the incinerator. As at 22 May 2017, 6.74 MT, or 6.7%, of the thionylchloride had been destroyed.

6. Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") teams continue to inspect GEKA mbH every two months, with the last such inspection having been conducted from 27 to 29 March 2017. No issues were encountered with the destruction process.

7. GEKA mbH continues to pursue the required permits to alter the destruction technology from incineration to neutralisation. Approval of the permits is anticipated in the June/July time period. GEKA mbH will change over to neutralisation upon receipt of the approvals.

8. Secretariat personnel have travelled to Germany to conduct an inspection at GEKA mbH from 21 to 23 May 2017, and are accompanied by two observers from the Libyan National Authority. Observations from the inspection of the destruction activities will continue to be included in the monthly updates.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Libya

9. The Secretariat inspected the destruction operations at GEKA mbH between 27 and 29 March 2017. GEKA mbH notified the Secretariat that problems persist with the flow meter and reported the change to swing meters to indicate the flow of thionylchloride into the incinerator. The Secretariat inspection team confirmed that the swing meter was in place and verified the destruction through on-site confirmation and review of video recordings.

10. The Secretariat continues to discuss with GEKA mbH the timelines for the incineration and neutralisation of the remaining chemicals.

11. As previously reported, the Secretariat was informed that during decanting operations at the Ruwagha storage facility, one container experienced an exothermic reaction, causing the material inside to polymerise. Owing to the levels of the Category 2 chemicals remaining in the container (approximately 5%), the viscous nature of the remnants, and the limited ability to recover any useable material, the Secretariat is in a position to affirm that the material no longer presents a proliferation threat.

12. In line with decision EC-M-51/DEC.1 (dated 24 February 2016), the Secretariat has concluded an agreement with the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) to contract a Libyan firm to complete the destruction of the one remaining tank at the Ruwagha facility. The viscous nature of the material remaining in the tank will require reloading of a partial amount to allow for hydrolysis of the material. Hydrolysis tests were conducted at the OPCW Laboratory on samples obtained from the tank, with a view to providing the correct methodology for destruction.

13. The Secretariat, in accordance with the report of the Council at its Eighty-Third Session (paragraph 6.12 of EC-83/5, dated 11 November 2016), continues to consult with the United Nations Office of Safety and Security (UNDSS) as to the possibility of Secretariat personnel travelling to Ruwagha to obtain soil samples. The UNDSS is currently advising against such travel. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation.

Overall costs and status of the trust fund

14. On 1 August 2016, the Secretariat issued a Note calling for voluntary contributions to the trust fund for support to Libya (S/1400/2016, dated 1 August 2016). As at the cut-off date of this report, the trust fund had received over EUR 1.2 million, with contributions having been received from Canada, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, and the United States of America. An additional EUR 133,638 was received from Canada in the form of a transfer of funds from a previous trust fund dedicated to Libya. As at the cut-off date of this report, expenses in the amount of EUR 741,142 had been charged to the trust fund for activities related to the destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons.

15. The trust fund continues to be used to fund activities related to Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons. The OPCW has concluded an agreement with UNOPS, utilising funding from Cyprus, Finland, and New Zealand for the destruction of the remaining tank at Ruwagha.

16. The Secretariat has hired an expert company to develop a programme of work and budget for the clean-up operations of the Ruwagha Tank Farm. The programme of work and budget will be presented to potential donors for their consideration. The Secretariat acknowledges the request by the Council at its Eighty-Third Session to obtain soil samples from the area surrounding decanted Category 2 chemical tanks (paragraph 6.12 of EC-83/5). No action will be taken until sufficient soil samples can be obtained.

17. The Director-General would once again like to express his appreciation to those States Parties that have already made or have committed to making voluntary contributions to the trust fund.

United Nations A/71/919–S/2017/471

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
6 June 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 41
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 30 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 30 May 2017 addressed to you by the representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Dânâ (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

17-09172 (E) 120617

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Annex to the letter dated 30 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 19 May 2017 (A/71/914-S/2017/441) addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, which yet again contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace. As for the false assertion regarding "illegally issued" notices to airmen, it must be underlined that activities within the Ercan advisory airspace that require notices to airmen are carried out by the relevant authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy that has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control. Furthermore, I would like to stress that the allegation regarding the interference of radio frequencies is also totally baseless.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly states "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2016 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at 3,628,887, while this number is expected to be around 3,900,000 in 2017. Moreover, in 2016, 27,109 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 210,789 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, and these numbers are expected to be around 28,080 and 225,000 respectively in 2017. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety, in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

At a time when the comprehensive settlement negotiations are at a critical stage, I deem it necessary to stress the need to fully channel all our efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict in line with the established United Nations parameters and the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, which envisage a new partnership on the basis of the political equality of the two peoples of the island within the framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with two constituent States of equal status. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric, which is not reflective of the joint vision and cooperation expressed by the leaders of both communities on the island since the resumption of the settlement talks in May 2015. As the two future partners in the island of Cyprus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the solution of the Cyprus problem will comprehensively deal with all pending issues between the two sides and thus focus all our efforts towards the ultimate goal of settlement.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that, as the Turkish Cypriot side, we are committed to maintaining our constructive and positive stance for a results-oriented negotiating process within the context of your good offices mission in Cyprus and encourage our Greek Cypriot neighbours to follow a similar path.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations S/2017/472

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 June 2017

Original: English

United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous relevant resolutions, including resolution 825 (1993), resolution 1540 (2004), resolution 1695 (2006), resolution 1718 (2006), resolution 1874 (2009), resolution 1887 (2009), resolution 2087 (2013), resolution 2094 (2013), resolution 2270 (2016), and resolution 2321 (2016), as well as the statements of its President of 6 October 2006 (S/PRST/2006/41), 13 April 2009 (S/PRST/2009/7) and 16 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/13),

Reaffirming that proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery, constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

Expressing serious concern that the DPRK has continued to violate relevant Security Council resolutions through repeated launches and attempted launches of ballistic missiles, and *noting* that all such ballistic missile activities contribute to the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons delivery systems and increase tension in the region and beyond,

Expressing great concern that the DPRK's prohibited arms sales have generated revenues that are diverted to the pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles while DPRK citizens have unmet needs,

Expressing its gravest concern that the DPRK's ongoing nuclear- and ballistic missile-related activities have further generated increased tension in the region and beyond, and *determining* that there continues to exist a clear threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and taking measures under its Article 41,

1. *Condemns* in the strongest terms the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities including a series of ballistic missile launches and other activities conducted by the DPRK since 9 September 2016 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions;

2. *Reaffirms* its decisions that the DPRK shall abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and immediately cease all related activities; shall not conduct any further launches that use ballistic missile technology, nuclear tests, or any other provocation; shall suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile programme and in this context

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re-establish its pre-existing commitments to a moratorium on missile launches; and shall abandon any other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner;

3. *Recalls* the measures imposed by paragraph 8 of resolution 1718 (2006), as modified by subsequent resolutions, and *decides* that the measures specified in paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 1718 (2006) shall apply to the individuals and entities listed in Annex I and II of this resolution and to any individuals or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction, and to entities owned or controlled by them, including through illicit means, and that the measures specified in paragraph 8 (e) of resolution 1718 (2006) shall apply to the individuals listed in Annex I of this resolution and to individuals acting on their behalf or at their direction;

4. *Reiterates* the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in north-east Asia at large, *expresses* its commitment to a peaceful, diplomatic, and political solution to the situation, and *welcomes* efforts by Council members as well as other States to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue and *stresses* the importance of working to reduce tensions in the Korean Peninsula and beyond;

5. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

Annex I

Travel Ban/Asset Freeze (Individuals)

1. CHO IL U

   a. *Description*: Director of the Fifth Bureau of the Reconnaissance General Bureau. Cho is believed to be in charge of overseas espionage operations and foreign intelligence collection for the DPRK.

   b. *AKA*: Cho Il Woo

   c. *Identifiers*: DOB: May 10, 1945; POB: Musan, North Hamgyo'ng Province, DPRK; nationality: DPRK; Passport Number 736410010

2. CHO YON CHUN

   a. *Description*: Vice Director of the Organization and Guidance Department, which directs key personnel appointments for the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK's military.

   b. *AKA*: Jo Yon Jun

   c. *Identifiers*: DOB: September 28, 1937; Nationality: DPRK

3. CHOE HWI

   a. *Description*: First Vice Director of the Workers' Party of Korea Propaganda and Agitation Department, which controls all DPRK media and is used by the government to control the public.

   b. *A.K.A.*: n/a

   c. *Identifiers*: YOB: 1954 or 1955, Nationality: DPRK; Gender: male; Address: DPRK

4. JO YONG-WON

   a. *Description*: Vice Director of the Worker's Party of Korea's Organization and Guidance Department, which directs key personnel appointments for the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK's military.

   b. A.K.A.: Cho Yongwon

   c. *Identifiers*: DOB: October 24, 1957; Nationality: DPRK; Gender, male; Address: DPRK

5. KIM CHOL NAM

   a *Description*: President of Korea Kumsan Trading Corporation, a company that procures supplies for General Bureau of Atomic Energy and serves as a cash route to the DPRK.

   b. *A.K.A.*: n/a

   c. *Identifiers*: DOB: February 19, 1970; Nationality: DPRK; Passport no.: 563120238; Address: DPRK

6. KIM KYONG OK

   a. *Description*: Vice Director of the Organization and Guidance Department, which directs key personnel appointments for the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK's military.

   b. *AKA*: Kim Kyong Ok

c. Identifiers: YOB: 1937 or 1938; Nationality: DPRK; Address: Pyongyang, DPRK

7. KIM TONG-HO

a. *Description*: Vietnam Representative for Tanchon Commercial Bank, which is the main DPRK financial entity for weapons and missile-related sales.

b. *A.K.A.*: n/a

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: August 18, 1969; Nationality: DPRK; Passport no.: 745310111; Gender: male; Address: Vietnam

8. MIN BYONG CHOL

a. *Description*: Member of the Worker's Party of Korea's Organization and Guidance Department, which directs key personnel appointments for the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK's military.

b. *A.K.A.*: Min Pyo'ng-ch'o'l, Min Byong-chol, Min Byong Chun

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: August 10, 1948; Nationality: DPRK; Gender: male; Address: DPRK

9. PAEK SE BONG

a. *Description*: Pack Se Bong is a former Chairman of the Second Economic Committee, a former member of the National Defense Commission, and a former Vice Director of Munitions Industry Department (MID).

b. *AKA*: n/a

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: 21 March 1938; Nationality: DPRK

10. PAK HAN SE

a. *Description*: Vice Chairman of the Second Economic Committee, which oversees the production of the DPRK's ballistic missiles and directs the activities of Korea Mining Development Corporation, the DPRK's premier arms dealer and main exporter of goods and equipment related to ballistic missiles and conventional weapons.

b. *A.K.A.*: Kang Myong Chol

c. *Identifiers*: Nationality: DPRK; Passport no.: 290410121; Address: DPRK

11. PAK TO CHUN

a. *Description*: Pak To Chun is a former Secretary of Munitions Industry Department (MID) and currently advises on affairs relating to nuclear and missile programmes. He is a former State Affairs Commission member and is a member Workers' Party of Korea Political Bureau.

b. *AKA*: Pak Do Chun

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: 9 March 1944; Nationality: DPRK

12. RI JAE IL

a. *Description*: Vice Director of the Workers' Party of Korea Propaganda and Agitation Department, which controls all DPRK's media and is used by the government to control the public.

b. *AKA*: RI, Chae-Il

c. *Identifiers*: YOB 1934; Nationality: DPRK

13. RI SU YONG

a. *Description*: Official for Korea Ryonbong General Corporation, specializes in acquisition for DPRK's defence industries and support to Pyongyang's military-related sales. Its procurements also probably support the DPRK's chemical weapons programme.

b. *AKA*: n/a

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: June 25, 1968; Nationality: DPRK; Passport no.: 654310175; Gender: male; Address: Cuba

14. RI YONG MU

a. *Description*: Ri Yong Mu is a Vice Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, which directs and guides all DPRK's military, defence, and security-related affairs, including acquisition and procurement.

b. *AKA*: n/a

c. *Identifiers*: DOB: 25 January 1925; Nationality: DPRK

Annex II

Asset Freeze (Entities)

1. KANGBONG TRADING CORPORATION

   a. *Description*: The Kangbong Trading Corporation sold, supplied, transferred, or purchased, directly or indirectly, to or from the DPRK, metal, graphite, coal, or software, where revenue or goods received may benefit the Government of the DPRK or the Workers' Party of Korea. The Kangbong Trading Corporation's parent is the Ministry of People's Armed Forces.

   b. *AKA*: N/A

   c. *Location*: DPRK

2. KOREA KUMSAN TRADING CORPORATION

   a. *Description*: Korea Kumsan Trading Corporation is owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the General Bureau of Atomic Energy, which oversees the DPRK's nuclear programme.

   b. *AKA*: N/A

   c. *Location*: Pyongyang, DPRK

3. KORYO BANK

   a. *Description*: Koryo Bank operates in the financial services industry in the DPRK's economy and is associated with Office 38 and Office 39 of the KWP.

   b. *AKA*: N/A

   c. *Location*: Pyongyang, DPRK

4. STRATEGIC ROCKET FORCE OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE'S ARMY

   a. *Description*: The Strategic Rocket Force of the Korean People's Army is in charge of all DPRK ballistic missile programmes and is responsible for SCUD and NODONG launches.

   b. *AKA*: Strategic Rocket Force; Strategic Rocket Force Command of KPA; Strategic Force; Strategic Forces

   c. *Location*: Pyongyang, DPRK

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Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2301 (2016), by which the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2017 and requested me to report to the Council by 1 October 2016 and every four months thereafter. The report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic and the implementation of the mandate of MINUSCA since the issuance of my previous report (S/2017/94) on 1 February 2017.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. The period under review was marked by uneven progress in the political process. Intensified clashes between armed groups in central and eastern prefectures marred peace and recovery efforts, causing a deterioration of the humanitarian situation. In contrast, a period of sustained calm in Bangui created the conditions for key institutions to address the multiple stabilization and recovery challenges. The presence of armed groups was also successfully reduced in Bambari thanks to the robust posture of MINUSCA, enabling initial steps to restore State authority and basic services in the country's second most important town. This created an environment in which all of the 14 main armed groups participated, for the first time since the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, in 2015, in a dialogue with the Government at the fourth meeting of the Consultative Follow-up Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation. Meanwhile, while progress was made towards establishing constitutionally mandated institutions, political competition increased, in particular between the executive and legislative branches of government. Some progress was recorded through the initial disbursement of funds committed at the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic, held on 17 November 2016, but more will be required to deliver highly anticipated peace dividends to the population and catalyse the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

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3. Intense fighting continued among ex-Séléka groups over control of lucrative swathes of territory in the central and eastern prefectures. The violence essentially pitted the Unité pour la paix en centrafrique (UPC) against a coalition led by the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), uniting some ex-Séléka factions and self-defence groups loosely referred to as anti-balaka. The continued conflict between the FPRC coalition and UPC led to repeated attacks on the Fulani population over its perceived affiliation with UPC. The attacks are also driven by attempts to seize their resources (cattle, in particular). Anti-balaka aligned with the FPRC coalition also targeted Muslim communities in the south and east. This pattern of violence coincides with an increase in cattle migrating into the eastern Central African Republic, generating friction between local farmers and herders and Fulani herders or armed militia, causing animosity towards the Muslim community. In this environment, the targeted killing of Muslims in Bangassou on 13 and 14 May sparked reprisals in Bria from ex-Séléka members against anti-Balaka elements of the FPRC coalition, demonstrating the fractured and opportunistic nature of the FPRC coalition, as well as the risk that armed elements may be easily manipulated by spoilers acting for self-serving reasons.

4. In a context of continued violence, the Government convened the fourth Consultative Follow-up Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation on 20 and 21 April. Following robust action by MINUSCA in February, FPRC and Maxime Mokom's anti-balaka group decided to designate representatives to the Committee, with the result that all 14 main armed groups attended the meeting. During the proceedings, the President, Faustin Archange Touadera, called for an immediate ceasefire and a broad dialogue under his auspices on political issues and confirmed that he had accepted the offer of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation to support this dialogue.

5. Several initiatives to support the peace process continued, including the African Initiative, led by the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, with the support of Angola, Chad and the Republic of the Congo. For its part, the Community of Sant'Egidio convened closed-door sessions with representatives of some of the armed groups in February and March in support of peace. In this context, many members of the National Assembly and civil society representatives took public stands against amnesty for individuals who have committed serious crimes and human rights violations. On 13 April, the President of the National Assembly, Karim Meckassoua, announced that the Assembly would launch its own peace initiative, which he later clarified would be in support of the Government's efforts.

6. President Touadera marked one year in office on 30 March with an address to the nation that highlighted his Government's progress, including the establishment of six institutions required by the Constitution such as the Constitutional Court, progress towards operationalizing the Special Criminal Court, and the continued deployment of civil servants to the prefectures. The President visited Bossangoa and Obo, and Bambari twice, first in March with the Vice-President of the World Bank for Africa and again in April with the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie. The President of the United Nations General Assembly visited Bangui on 10 and 11 May to express his support for peacekeeping and the country's recovery efforts.

7. The National Assembly held its second extraordinary session from 27 January to 6 February during which it adopted legislation on intellectual property and the postal system. The first ordinary session of 2017, held from 1 March to 31 May, elected a new bureau of the Assembly on 9 March and adopted laws creating the National Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Commission and establishing

the new Military Justice Code, and ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

8. To foster greater collaboration and coordination with international partners on economic recovery and development, humanitarian response, and key political and governance reforms, the Government established structures to operationalize the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Framework for Mutual Engagement between the Central African Government and the international community On 22 March, the President convened the first meeting of the advisory board, the highest-level forum within this architecture and the venue for discussions between the Government and international partners on strategic issues related to peace, stability, human security and recovery.

B. Security situation

9. In contrast to the relative calm in Bangui, armed group violence remained high across the country, especially in Haute-Kotto, Moomou, Ouaka, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé prefectures, driven by competition over seasonal livestock migration and efforts to control resource-rich territory.

10. Hostilities rose sharply between the FPRC coalition and UPC in the centre and eastern prefectures during February and March, but decreased in intensity in April with many FPRC coalition fighters returning to their original positions. With the intention of capturing Bambari and expelling UPC leader Ali Darassa, the FPRC coalition captured various UPC positions north of Bambari in February. On 11 February, following repeated warnings by MINUSCA that any further advance towards Ippy (80 km north-east of Bambari, Ouaka prefecture) would be considered a clear threat to civilians, a MINUSCA armed helicopter engaged a column of approximately 300 members of the FPRC coalition 12 km east of Ippy after they crossed the line stipulated by MINUSCA. Around this time, the former Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique chief of staff and leader of FPRC coalition operations in Bria, Joseph Zoundeiko, was reportedly killed in circumstances that remain unknown. MINUSCA reinforced its position in Ippy to prevent further movement towards Bambari. On 21 February, alleged FPRC coalition elements fired upon MINUSCA between Ippy and Bambari, wounding four peacekeepers.

11. As part of MINUSCA's robust efforts to advance its mandated strategic objective and protect civilians in and around Bambari, and in close coordination with the Government, MINUSCA pressed the armed group leaders to leave Bambari and subsequently launched "Operation Bekpa" to stabilize the town and enable the gradual restoration of State authority. On 22 February, Ali Darassa and some UPC elements withdrew from Bambari. Anti-balaka leaders followed suit shortly thereafter. On 26 February, MINUSCA again used its armed helicopters to engage FPRC coalition fighters as they attempted to infiltrate Bambari in violation of the previously communicated line. MINUSCA subsequently detained Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) political leader Idriss El Bachar and FPRC political leader Yaya Idriss, and transferred both to national judicial authorities in Bangui.

12. Security in Bambari was bolstered by a reinforced MINUSCA presence and through the deployment of national security forces. However, armed group elements remain in Bambari, though they are not displaying weapons or military attire. The FPRC coalition continued to attempt to control the major routes around Bambari and pursued UPC as it moved east, attacking Bakouma (110 km north of Bangassou, Mboumou prefecture) on 20 March and gaining control of the Nzako mining site

(45 km north of Bakouma) on 21 March. Reports indicate that anti-balaka targeted primarily Muslims in Bakouma, killing some 16 persons, while the FPRC attack on Nzacko left two dead. Tensions also mounted between the FPRC coalition and the Fulani population in and around Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture. On 15 February, UPC-affiliated Fulani armed men torched Makili village 60 km south of Bria. On 9 March, an armed Fulani group attacked Grao (70 km south-east of Bria), resulting in IDP movement towards Bria.

13. Self-defence groups, loosely referred to as anti-balaka, in loose association with the FPRC coalition increased attacks against UPC and ethnic Fulanis. During the seizure of Bakouma, on 20 March, anti-balaka elements systematically attacked Fulani civilians. On 24 March, MINUSCA repelled an anti-balaka attack on the Fulani neighbourhood of Gobolo in Bria, detaining 11 anti-balaka elements, two of whom were wounded; the other nine were transferred to national custody in Bangui. On 11 April, MINUSCA seized a large cache of weapons and ammunition allegedly destined for anti-balaka in Bangassou. On 8 May, anti-balaka ambushed a MINUSCA convoy 20 km east of Bangassou, Mbomou prefecture, killing five peacekeepers, and injuring ten, making this the deadliest attack against MINUSCA. On 9 May, in Alindao, Basse-Kotto prefecture, anti-balaka clashed with UPC causing an estimated 100 casualties, which led MINUSCA to deploy peacekeepers to the area to protect some 14,000 displaced persons.

14. On 13 May, heavily armed anti-balaka launched an offensive against MINUSCA in Bangassou, followed by attacks on the predominantly Muslim Tokoyo neighbourhood. One peacekeeper was killed and one injured during the effort to repel the offensive. Anti-balaka destroyed the access bridges to Bangassou, took control of water points, and displaced some 2,500 persons who took refuge in the cathedral, the mosque and the hospital. An estimated 7,200 persons remain displaced in the town while some 2,750 have fled to the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. At least 115 persons were killed and 64 injured. MINUSCA reinforced its deployments in the area to stabilize the situation, including by deploying additional peacekeepers and making use of its attack helicopters and escorting some 1,000 Muslims to safety at the cathedral. Following the violence in Bangassou, clashes broke out in Bria on 16 May between anti-Balaka and armed elements from the Arab community, currently led by Ahmat Issa, loosely affiliated with the FPRC-led coalition. The clashes, which lasted for several days, left at least 49 dead and 35 injured and caused the displacement of some 38,267 people.

15. Kaga Bandoro remained relatively calm, yet the number of security incidents remained high, and ex-Séléka and anti-balaka continued to extort money from and threaten some 9,000 internally displaced persons living around the MINUSCA camp, preventing their return or relocation to another displaced persons camp in Kaga Bandoro, currently sheltering 4,050 individuals after 6,700 reportedly returned to their residences.

16. In the absence of State authority in the central and eastern prefectures, FPRC and MPC are increasingly establishing parallel administration structures. Armed elements purport to enforce order by illegally detaining and sentencing persons suspected of committing crimes and extorting payments from them. FPRC in Ndélé and Birao, and FPRC/MPC in Kaga Bandoro, occupy existing gendarmerie buildings, appearing armed and in uniform, effecting illegal detentions and handing down arbitrary sentences for alleged crimes. In Nzako, Mbomou prefecture, FPRC elements oversee the activities of gendarmerie, police, custom services and mining sites. FPRC recently provided fuel and medicine to Ndélé prefectural hospital, threatening to take over the administration of the hospital if the State would not address capacity gaps. In Vakaga prefecture, FPRC increased its presence along the

borders with Chad and the Sudan to control cross-border movements of persons and goods.

17. In south-east Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou prefectures, security was affected by criminal activities attributed to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the LRA dissident Doctor Achaye, Sudanese poachers and rogue UPC elements. Along the Zemio-Obo axis, unidentified armed elements killed two civilians on 31 January and attacked a truck contracted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 110 km west of Obo on 10 February. On 17 February, presumed LRA elements looted a town on the Dembia-Djema axis and temporarily abducted five men. On 30 March, some 40 presumed LRA elements unsuccessfully attempted to halt a MINUSCA logistics convoy 40 km east of Rafaï. In this context, the Uganda People's Defence Forces deployed in the Central African Republic as part of the African Union Regional Task Force formally handed over security to the Central African authorities in a disengagement ceremony in Obo on 18 May, while the United States forces supporting Task Force in the Central African Republic terminated their operations on 25 April. On 12 May, the African Union Peace and Security Council requested the Security Council to take disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army into account in the mandate of MINUSCA.

18. In the north-west, the security situation was characterized by the efforts of armed groups to control livestock. There is information about recriminations among members of the National Assembly over allegations of support to local anti-Balaka groups. MPC/Revolution et Justice (RJ) attempted to expand its area of influence across Ouham and Ouham Pendé prefectures to the border with Cameroon, generating conflict with anti-balaka. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) and anti-balaka clashed over the livestock trade along the Cameroon border in Ouham Pendé prefecture. On 28 January, anti-balaka reportedly ambushed a convoy of Fulani traders escorted by 3R near Koui, Ouham-Pendé, killing 12 individuals. On 2 February, 3R clashed with anti-balaka in Bocaranga, leaving two civilians and seven 3R elements wounded, one anti-balaka dead and several thousand civilians fleeing the area. During the incident, anti-balaka elements opened fire on MINUSCA, prompting the peacekeepers to return fire. In March, MINUSCA established a buffer zone to halt clashes between anti-balaka and MPC in Bozoum and Gouzé, Ouham-Pendé prefecture.

19. The security situation remained relatively calm in Bangui. On 7 February, MINUSCA supported an operation led by national security forces to arrest Youssouf Malinga (alias "Big Man"), a member of a self-defence group. During the operation, Malinga's bodyguards responded to the attempted arrest by firing at the national security forces. In the ensuing exchange of fire, Malinga and one of his men were killed, in addition to two civilians, one of whom was a child. In a series of reprisal attacks, Malinga's men targeted civilians and religious buildings in the area, including by hurling a grenade into a crowd. In total, 11 people were killed and 18 injured.

20. On 9 March, a MINUSCA police officer in civilian attire was assaulted by suspected criminals in the third district of Bangui and died from his wounds. A national investigation, supported by MINUSCA, was opened into the incident.

C. Reconciliation

21. The first pillar of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan is aimed at supporting peace, security and reconciliation as essential underpinnings to recovery and normalization. In this regard, a network of local peace and reconciliation committees will be created at the local, regional and national levels. Of the 16 local

peace committees, two have been established with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, national authorities have yet to take full ownership of these initiatives. Following the departure of UPC from Bambari, the local peace committee was reconstituted. It organized community awareness-raising campaigns, reopened the central market and provided a platform for farmers and herders to resolve their differeaces, free from control by armed groups.

22. The one-year anniversary of the non-aggression pact between the predominantly Muslim PK5 district and the Christian neighbourhood of Boeing in Bangui was celebrated on 11 February. Community leaders articulated a strategy for ensuring the peaceful return of displaced Muslim families to the fifth district of Bangui and established a committee to implement the strategy. Leaders also held dialogues on freedom of movement, trade and peaceful coexistence.

III. Progress in implementing resolution 2301 (2016)

23. In line with its revised mission concept, MINUSCA's integrated mandate implementation approach focused on robust efforts to protect civilians in the light of the persistent clashes, while simultaneously facilitating dialogue with armed groups to persuade them to cease hostilities and honour their commitment to engage in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. Through Operation Bekpa, MINUSCA and partners are focusing efforts in and around Bambari to implement an "armed group-free city" initiative and support the Government to advance restoring State authority, including by coordinating efforts with the United Nations country team and international partners.

24. MINUSCA continued strengthening mobility and responsiveness, including in the context of Operation Bekpa through establishing an ad hoc joint task force for Bambari. In an environment of inaccessible roads and destroyed bridges, the combined use of transport and attack helicopters allowed the projection of forces from Bangui and the adoption of a robust and dynamic posture. For example, in March, a platoon was rapidly airlifted from Bangui to protect civilians under threat in Bakouma, while robust patrols and mobile deployments were decisive in preventing armed groups from entering Bambari. In the light of emerging new hotspots in the south-east, MINUSCA continued to adjust its force posture by redeploying troops in a flexible manner, but the situation is further compounded by increased fighting among armed groups, which includes the targeting of MINUSCA, and the departure of the Uganda People's Defence Forces. Efforts are also focused on assessing the broader military needs, including additional deployments within the authorized troop ceiling.

25. MINUSCA strengthened its strategic use of communications in support of the mandate and increased its outreach activities, including through the MINUSCA radio station, Guira FM. It held 73 public information events across the country, involving more than 85,000 people, to promote peaceful coexistence. This was particularly important in Bambari to explain the redeployment of State authority and the impartiality of the Mission in the light of accusations of bias.

A. Immediate priorities

Protection of civilians

26. Efforts to continually adjust deployments enabled MINUSCA to enhance its response time to early warnings and protection flashpoints. Likewise, increasing

community-level engagement in the design and implementation of community protection plans allowed MINUSCA to enhance its protection of civilians' efforts.

27. Violence associated with seasonal migration was characterized by cattle rustling and reprisals involving anti-balaka militias and armed groups. The Government's operational plan to reduce violence associated with seasonal migration remains largely unimplemented owing to funding shortages. The government institutions and subregional mechanisms that regulated the seasonal migration prior to the crisis are no longer functioning, resulting in cycles of violence and depriving Central Africans of seasonal pastoralist income. In this context, MINUSCA continued to conduct long-range patrols along migratory corridors, while local committees are pursuing solutions at the community level.

28. Some 21 MINUSCA joint protection teams were deployed to investigate armed group violence against civilians in different prefectures. These integrated teams documented abuses of human rights and gathered information to enhance the ability of MINUSCA to prevent and respond to violence. Through the United Nations Mine Action Service, MINUSCA disposed of 9,598 ammunition and explosive devices in populated areas and provided risk education to 74,710 beneficiaries.

Promoting and protecting human rights (including women and children)

29. MINUSCA documented 492 human rights violations or abuses or violations of international humanitarian law committed against 834 victims, comprising 442 men, 103 women, 172 children (58 boys, 56 girls and 58 unidentified minors), and another 117 unidentified victims. These incidents comprised arbitrary killings, violations of physical integrity, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions and abductions. The following armed groups were responsible for 326 human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law: ex-Séléka factions (202), anti-balaka (67), LRA (38), MPC/RJ (7), 3R (7), Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (4), and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) (1). Nearly half of these abuses occurred in the context of the conflict between the FPRC coalition and UPC. National security forces were responsible for 165 violations, including 153 cases of arbitrary detention, of which 104 were attributed to the national gendarmerie and 49 to national police.

30. The human rights mapping report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and humanitarian law committed from 2003 to 2015 is slated to be launched on 30 May. The report will contribute to combating impunity by supporting the prosecutorial strategy of the Special Criminal Court and the development of transitional justice mechanisms.

31. The United Nations system continued to apply the United Nations human rights due diligence policy. Of the 35 requests for support by non-United Nations security forces (military, gendarmerie and police), 29 were approved, with risk mitigation measures recommended when appropriate.

32. MINUSCA conducted 19 workshops to raise awareness on human rights, including conflict-related sexual violence and transitional justice, for 796 individuals (440 men and 356 women), local authorities, civil society and journalists. MINUSCA also conducted 29 outreach campaigns on human rights-related issues, in which 2,625 people (1,267 women and 1,358 men) participated.

Conflict-related sexual violence

33. MINUSCA received reports of 27 conflict-related sexual violence incidents affecting 20 women and 12 girls. Of the cases, 25 involved rape and 2 sexual

assault. The following armed groups were allegedly responsible: ex-Seleka factions (13), the RJ/MPC coalition (5), LRA (6), anti-balaka (2) and UFDR (1).

Children and armed conflict

34. Grave violations and abuses committed against children by armed groups continued to be verified by the country task force on monitoring and reporting. Hostilities between the FPRC-led coalition and UPC continued to take a toll on children. A total of 14 children (of whom 6 were girls) were killed; 13 children sustained injuries; 12 girls were raped; and 6 children were abducted. A total of 16 children were recruited or joined armed groups, while two hospitals and four schools were occupied and looted. Perpetrators of these grave child rights violations included the FPRC coalition, UPC, anti-balaka, RJ, LRA and unidentified armed individuals.

35. In order to enhance the monitoring of grave child rights violations and the protection of children, 257 MINUSCA peacekeepers were trained on child rights and child protection. The training was extended to 432 external partners, including local communities, non-governmental organizations and national defence and national security forces.

36. UNICEF provided integration support to 420 children released from armed groups, while 239 children (of whom 55 were girls) were separated from anti-balaka groups. As part of efforts to end the association of children with armed groups, MINUSCA in collaboration with local partners organized a week-long campaign in February to sensitize armed groups, community members and authorities in five localities on the impact of armed conflict on children.

B. Sustainably reducing the presence of, and the threat posed by, armed groups

37. MINUSCA continues to implement a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving the strategic objective of sustainably reducing the threat and presence of armed groups. This strategy is informed by the primacy of the political process.

Support for reconciliation and the extension of State authority

38. MINUSCA used its good offices to assist the Government in advancing reconciliation, including by encouraging it to rapidly mobilize and deploy donor funding to deliver essential services to the population and generate popular trust in the Government's commitment to equitable development. The United Nations supported local dialogue among communities and provided short-term employment, vocational training and awareness-raising sessions for 18,002 youth at risk, members of vulnerable groups and displaced persons. MINUSCA facilitated 30 trips by parliamentarians to consult their constituents on the work of the legislature.

39. MINUSCA supported the deployment of 410 civil servants countrywide, primarily from the Ministry of Education. MINUSCA and UNDP supported the Ministry of Interior in developing a guide to promote understanding of concepts of good governance among civil servants in the regions. MINUSCA and UNDP, with financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund, mapped the actual deployment of government personnel and the conditions required to ensure that they are operational.

40. Redeploying State security, judicial, social service and administrative authorities to Bambari was prioritized to demonstrate the ability of State institutions to function properly to the benefit of the populations when armed conflict is

restrained. Some 90 gendarmes and police officers have deployed to Bambari after being trained by MINUSCA and reviewed under the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, and are working in tandem with MINUSCA uniformed personnel. MINUSCA also supported the return of the local Prosecutor to Bambari.

Support for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

41. MINUSCA facilitated the organization of the fourth meeting of the Consultative Follow-up Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation. A significant outcome of the meeting was the agreement by all armed groups to participate in a pilot disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation/integration project, targeting 560 participants. However, FPRC declined to validate the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme pending the fulfilment of several preconditions, including the signature of a political agreement. The World Bank committed $30 out of the $45 million required for the reintegration component of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme.

42. In the absence of a political agreement and a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, community violence reduction and pre-disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation continued to play a vital role. A total of 4,324 ex-combatants, including 737 women, are participating in pre-disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programmes in eight locations through cash-for-work programmes, as a transitional means to longer-term income generating projects, as well as through training to support the sustainable reinsertion of ex-combatants.

43. The community violence reduction project in Ouham-Pendé prefecture, implemented with the International Organization for Migration, engaged 6,723 beneficiaries, of whom 1,623 are women, in cash-for-work jobs and intercommunal dialogue. In Bangui, through the community violence reduction projects launched with the United Nations Office for Project Services, 543 beneficiaries, of whom 40 are women, completed vocational training and 777 beneficiaries, of whom 47 are women, are participating in agro-pastoral training conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization. Community violence reduction beneficiaries also included youth at risk through labour-intensive income-generating programmes.

44. The destruction of 169 items of unexploded ordnance and 840 rounds of small arms ammunition and the safe storage of weapons collected through the pre-disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process contributed to the removal of weapons and ammunition from circulation and their potential use by armed groups.

Support for security sector reform

45. Significant progress was achieved in designing an enabling strategic framework for security sector reform, although this sector continues to suffer from insufficient financing. The National Security Policy was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 2 February. The elements contained in the policy were further articulated in the 2017-2022 National security sector reform Strategy, adopted by the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform and National Reconciliation on 10 March. The strategy is focused on three key areas: strengthening security sector capacity; reinforcing security of persons, goods and restoration of State authority; and fostering good governance and the rule of law. On 21 March, the Ministry of Defence launched the development of a national defence policy, with support from the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic.

46. The European Union Military Training Mission completed the training of the first battalion of national defence forces (Forces armées centrafricaines) and started training the second battalion in May, while the Central African authorities are still considering their deployment. The issue of equipment, sustainment and logistical support for this trained battalion remains unresolved. MINUSCA conducted training-of-trainers sessions for 120 military personnel, including 24 officers, on information and communication sciences and battalion administration. MINUSCA rehabilitated and furnished Camp Leclerc training centre in Bouar and is scheduled to hand it over to the national authorities in May.

47. MINUSCA continued to support weapons and ammunition management efforts; completed the training of 17 members of the security forces and implemented three infrastructure projects, including the construction of one armoury in Bangui and the deployment of one armoury container in Bambari. Meanwhile, the establishment of the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons was made official on 14 February through a decree, drafted with support from MINUSCA.

48. The recruitment process for 250 police officers and 250 gendarmes conducted by national authorities continued to advance with MINUSCA support. Of 13,649 applications received from all 16 prefectures, 10,370 (of which 28 per cent were from women) were assessed to meet the minimum requirements by a mixed oversight committee comprising government, UNDP and MINUSCA representatives. The committee prepared the selection tests, to ensure balanced geographical and gender representation. The written and physical selection tests were completed by 27 May. MINUSCA is coordinating with the Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP to ensure the coverage of the running costs of the police and gendarmerie academies, while the Government has committed to include the payroll of the 500 new officers in the national budget for 2018. On 20 May, MINUSCA supported the launch of the written examination for the recruitment of the gendarmes and police officers in all the prefectures of the country, except for Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures, where the tests were postponed owing to security concerns.

Support for the rule of law and efforts to combat impunity, including through the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court

49. Efforts to combat impunity continued to advance through the significant progress made in operationalizing the Special Criminal Court, beginning with its investigation and prosecution capacity. Three out of a total of six international magistrates have been appointed, including the Special Prosecutor and two female investigating judges. All five national magistrates were also appointed, while the national Chief Registrar has yet to be selected. While the Special Prosecutor is deployed on 25 May, investigation and prosecution can only begin after the Central African authorities complete the selection of judicial police officers to form a team of investigators. Full funding for the Court's first 14 months has been secured, but a significant gap remains with regard to the full five years of its initial duration. Following the adoption of the Military Justice Code by the National Assembly on 7 March, MINUSCA is working with the Central African authorities to clarify the provisions of the code regarding the need to maintain the exclusive jurisdiction of the Special Criminal Court on crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

50. MINUSCA continued its efforts to support the rule of law. The Mission apprehended 92 alleged perpetrators, using urgent temporary measures in 57 cases. Owing to insecurity and the lack of functional courts and prisons outside the capital, MINUSCA temporarily detained and supported the transfer to Bangui, at the request of the Government, of 33 of those apprehended. MINUSCA continued to provide advice to investigations into some 17 people allegedly involved in serious crimes,

most notably against 13 FPRC coalition members indicted in March 2017 on counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

51. The High Judicial Council continued to rotate judicial personnel, with magistrates taking up new posts in February and March. A total of 19 new magistrates were named throughout the country and 10 took up their posts by early March in Bangui. Housing and payment of salary for magistrates continue to undermine their sustainable redeployment beyond Bangui.

52. Challenges afflicting the justice system are having a significant impact on overcrowding in prisons. The Ngaragba central prison and its annex at Camp de Roux stand at 178 per cent and 116 per cent, respectively, of their capacity. In the past six months, MINUSCA has continued to engage the Prosecutor at the appeals court in Bangui to develop strategies to accelerate the processing of pending cases, including limiting incarceration in cases of minor infractions to time served in pretrial detention. Magistrates unable to return to some regions owing to insecurity were temporarily assigned to Bangui in April to help reduce the backlog of cases, thereby enabling weekly court sessions to be doubled, from three to six.

53. To prevent further overcrowding in Bangui, MINUSCA financed the reconstruction of three detention facilities in Bangassou, Kaga Bandoro and Mbaiki through quick-impact projects. As part of MINUSCA's support to the national authorities to demilitarize prisons, it completed an initial assessment of the needs in this area and for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners. Overcrowding, poor conditions and a general lack of prisoner activity have contributed to insecurity within prisons. In March, with support from Canada and Sweden, 60 MINUSCA corrections officers participated in specialized prison intervention training to enhance the ability of MINUSCA ability to address prison insecurity.

Natural resources management

54. MINUSCA provided logistical and security support for national authorities during their field inspection and monitoring missions related to the Kimberley Process, with the aim of assessing the extent of armed group presence, improving security to enable the free movement of goods and persons, and restoring and extending State authority in the mining areas in the south-west of the country.

C. Coordination of international assistance and the Mutual Engagement Framework

55. The Government established mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Mutual Engagement Framework and the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. The three-tiered coordination structure comprises a high-level policy advisory board, a joint executive committee, and a technical level coordination forum for each pillar of the development strategy. The pillar on peace and security is co-chaired by the Presidency and the United Nations and has completed a mapping of projects and identified potential gaps in funding. Consultations are still under way for the co-presidency arrangements of the other two pillars, which has delayed their operationalization.

56. At the Brussels Conference in November 2016, donors pledged 2.2 billion to support the 2017-2021 National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. To date, donors have confirmed an estimated $2.23 billion, or 97 per cent, of the total pledges. The final amount, however, could be higher, as some donors have increased their pledges, while others that were not present in Brussels later decided to support

the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. Of all pledges committed, approximately 43 per cent were allocated to economic recovery and the productive sectors, 40 per cent to strengthening the social contract between the State and the population and 14 per cent to support peace, security and reconciliation, and 3 per cent to other issues. For 2017, expenditure to date on ongoing projects is $54.2 million (or 25.9 per cent) out of a projected $209.3 million for the first year.

IV. Humanitarian situation

57. The worsened violence over the past six months resulted in increased humanitarian needs, with multiple new hotspots emerging across the country, including in areas where there were already displaced populations. In April alone, more than 40,000 people were displaced as a result of fighting in the north-western and eastern parts of the country. One out of five Central Africans is currently displaced outside or inside the country, while armed violence is preventing them from returning home. The total number of internally displaced persons increased from 401,072 in February to 426,100 in March. This increase was predominantly due to new displacements recorded in Mbomou, Ouaka and Ouham-Pendé prefectures. During the same period, several displacement sites closed in Bangui with returns observed in the sub-prefecture of Bakala, Ouaka prefecture, and in Kaga Bandoro. Over 1,000 people fleeing violence crossed the border into Chad and Cameroon, which are hosting some 230,000 refugees. The number of refugees in neighbouring countries has increased slightly to 483,000 as at 30 April. Some 1,639 South Sudanese refugees relocated from Bambouti to Obo, Haut-Mbomou prefecture.

58. Some 2 million people — or approximately 50 per cent of the population — remain food insecure. Meanwhile, despite efforts to mobilize donors, including a high-level briefing with donors on humanitarian challenges held in Yaoundé on 15 March, humanitarian activities remain severely underfunded. As at 15 May the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017 had garnered only 16 per cent of the $399.5 million funding necessary.

59. Humanitarian actors also face insecurity, as they continue to be targeted indiscriminately. Some 31 per cent of attacks against non-governmental organizations recorded globally in 2016 took place in the Central African Republic, thereby making it the most dangerous place in the world for humanitarian actors.

60. While ongoing hostilities in the east have severely limited humanitarian access, other areas of concern include Koui in Ouham-Pendé prefecture in the west, which has been inaccessible since October 2016, and Ngaoundaye, where armed groups recently provoked the displacement of an additional 20,000 persons in early April, some of whom sought refuge in Chad. Accidental fire and torrential rains in April greatly damaged the camps for internally displaced persons in Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, and Kaga Bandoro, Nana Grébizi prefecture, causing deaths, injuries and loss of property.

V. Socioeconomic developments

61. Growth stood at 4.5 per cent in 2016, driven by forestry and agriculture. Subject to improved security, a portion of the $2.28 billion pledged to support the 2017-2021 National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan is expected to be used to inject money into the economy through public investment to address social needs.

62. Pursuant to the approval of a $120 million three-year extended credit facility, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde,

visited Bangui on 24 and 25 January and called upon the Government to raise domestic revenue, repay current debt, refrain from contracting new debt and improve public finance management.

VI. Deployment of the Mission

A. Military

63. As at 15 May, MINUSCA had deployed 10,471 military personnel (97.4 per cent of the authorized strength of 10,750), comprising 11 infantry battalions, a special forces company, a quick reaction force company, an unmanned aerial vehicle unit (deployed on 7 April 2017) and several enabling units, namely a military police unit, four engineering companies, a heavy transport company, three level II hospitals, a signal company and three helicopter units, including a combat helicopter unit. Women comprised 1.5 per cent of military personnel. Troop-contributing countries continued to improve the equipment of their respective contingents.

B. Police

64. As at 15 May, MINUSCA had deployed 1,845 police personnel (89 per cent of the authorized strength of 2,080), comprising 302 individual police officers (75 per cent of the authorized strength of 400, largely owing to the need for specialized recruitment profiles), as well as nine formed police units and two protection support units, comprising 1,543 personnel (92 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,680), including 103 women. A total of 81 individual police officers are deployed in 10 locations outside Bangui, while of the nine formed police units, three were in Bambari, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro. The remaining unit is expected to deploy in Bria in June.

C. Civilian personnel

65. As at 15 May, MINUSCA had deployed 1,329 civilian personnel, representing an incumbency rate of 77 per cent against a total of 1,724 authorized positions (790 international, 696 national and 238 United Nations Volunteer positions). Female staff members constitute 25 per cent of civilian personnel deployed and 22 per cent of personnel holding a senior position at the P-5 level or above. The recruitment and retention of female staff, including United Nations Volunteers, remains extremely challenging.

D. Status-of-forces agreement

66. Despite government efforts to address outstanding issues related to the status-of-forces agreement, there were serious breaches. On 2 February, the importation of four containers of flour for military contingents was blocked by customs for almost two months. The containers were released on 23 March, but the incident had already had negative consequences on the distribution of rations to MINUSCA peacekeepers. On 6 March, two containers of arms and ammunitions to support the deployment of a Jordanian formed police unit were seized and searched by local authorities in the absence of a United Nations representative. Although the incident was resolved, a firearm was missing when the containers were inventoried. On 14 March, two containers carrying plastic pipes were searched by customs officials in the absence of a United Nations representative.

67. The reimbursement to the United Nations of fuel taxes, which had been improperly imposed on MINUSCA in 2015 and 2016, was discussed at a meeting of a joint Government-MINUSCA working group on the implementation of the status-of-forces agreement held on 12 April 2017. Government representatives agreed that MINUSCA is exempt from fuel taxes pursuant to the agreement and affirmed that a procedure for reimbursing previously paid fuel taxes would be established. The Ministry of Finance confirmed that United Nations staff members are exempt from lease registration and related tax payments. Moreover, the practice of imposing taxes on MINUSCA personnel leaving the country with the residue of their pay and emoluments ceased.

VII. Safety and security of United Nations staff

68. The challenging security situation in the country is negatively impacting United Nations personnel, civilian and uniformed, national and international. Demonstrations and carjacking were recorded in Bangui and the outlying regions. In recent months, armed groups have begun issuing threats to kidnap both national and international staff in retaliation for the operations of the Mission. 134 security incidents affected 107 personnel of the United Nations security management system. In addition, 6 peacekeepers lost their lives as a result of attacks and 30 were seriously injured.

VIII. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

69. Between 1 February and 30 April 2017, 14 allegations of serious misconduct were reported to MINUSCA, including 5 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, representing a significant reduction in the number of new allegations reported, as compared with the same period a year ago. One of the new allegations relates to misconduct reported to have occurred in 2016 and four to incidents in 2017. In line with the MINUSCA sexual exploitation and abuse action plan, the Mission continued to enhance preventive efforts, including increasing the number of training of trainer sessions; better monitoring and oversight of training provided to all contingents; frequent risk assessments; increased sensitization by sexual exploitation and abuse focal points within military and police components; and paying particular attention to troops serving in remote areas and newly rotated contingents.

70. MINUSCA collaborated with United Nations agencies to improve its victims' assistance tracking tool and strengthen reporting, information sharing and coordinated responses with regard to the processing of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. Consistent with my directive, MINUSCA appointed a victims rights advocate and will use its resources to provide, inter alia, psychosocial assistance and legal assistance to address criminal incidents or, where the alleged victim is a minor, security, shelter and temporary financial support to a victim or their family based on need.

IX. Financial aspects

71. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/271, appropriated the amount of $920.7 million for the maintenance of MINUSCA for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. As at 15 May 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to $52 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,679.2 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police unit costs has been

made for the period up to 30 January 2017, while reimbursement of the cost of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

X. Observations

72. Over recent months, the Central African Republic has oscillated between consolidating gains achieved since the election of President Touadera, primarily in Bangui, and a serious deterioration of the security situation in other parts of the country, including deadly attacks against United Nations peacekeepers. As relevant as many of the advances to date have been, the latest spate of violence that erupted in May in some towns in the east and centre of the country risks derailing the progress achieved over the last year and spreading with disastrous consequences, both for civilians and the country's stability. We must avoid the persistent violent conflict and the associated tensions setting the country yet again on a downward spiral. I remain personally committed to exploring all possible options to contributing to reversing this negative trend and assisting the country in consolidating peace.

73. The clashes between armed groups in particular FPRC and UPC and violence perpetrated by anti-balaka groups operating in the south-east are of grave concern. The attacks against civilians on account of their ethnicity or religion and against the peacekeepers deployed to protect them are unacceptable. I call upon all armed groups to immediately cease hostilities and demonstrate their commitment to peaceful dialogue. I reiterate my call on regional leaders and institutions to use their influence to bring an end to the violence.

74. MINUSCA has demonstrated that it stands ready to act robustly to protect civilians and defend its mandate. I commend the call of President Touadera for an open, inclusive and genuine dialogue with the armed groups, and welcome the recent participation of all 14 armed groups in the national consultative committee for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. I urge all groups and the Government to engage in this dialogue as a matter of urgency and to honour their commitment to pursue a political agreement vital to the success of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and longer-term security sector reform. It is essential that this dialogue be inclusive and build upon the recommendations of the Bangui Forum.

75. I welcome the acceptance by President Touadera of the offer of assistance by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which has the potential, with strong regional and international support backed by a unified Security Council, to support a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government and all armed groups. I have expressed the full support of the United Nations for the African Initiative, and urge the African Union and the other members of the Initiative to quickly define and implement a road map to take this process forward. I wish to stress that time is of the essence. We have to work quickly in order to offer an alternative to violence to some armed groups and offer a short respite for the process to move forward. The onset of the rainy season should limit armed group movements. At the same time, I encourage the subregion to take concrete steps to address cross-border issues that foster insecurity in the Central African Republic and its neighbours, most notably illicit arms trafficking and seasonal migration. As the pastoralist season has peaked, subregional solutions to this sensitive political, economic and social issue are urgently required.

76. The capacity of the State remains extremely limited and State authority is only very gradually extending in areas where the security situation is relatively stable.

Progress is slow and not without tension between the executive and legislative branches as they adjust to their democratic roles. It is now incumbent on all national actors to make the most of the present engagement with the support of the international community, to work in an inclusive manner to accelerate efforts to advance reconciliation, consolidate the fragile gains and translate them into peace dividends, in particular beyond Bangui.

77. Further progress requires that Central Africans begin to see the dividends of peace. I urge national leaders to act swiftly and decisively to establish the capacity to mobilize, receive, manage and account for the generous donor funding pledged during the November 2016 Brussels conference. In doing so, a return to the corrupt practices and poor governance that triggered the crisis of recent years must be prevented. I urge donors to make funds available as quickly as possible, including for labour-intensive infrastructure projects that both gainfully employ young adults and weave the country together through a road network and social service systems. The impact of donor funding will be short-lived without the political commitment of those elected to serve the population and the resolve of all stakeholders to forfeit short-term gains for the long-term benefit of Central Africans countrywide. In this vein, I encourage the Government to use the Mutual Engagement Framework to obtain political support for, and demonstrate progress towards, agreed commitments.

78. The significant donor pledges demonstrated the determination of the international community to assist the Central Africans in this journey. I call upon all partners to take advantage of the presence of the peacekeeping operation in the country to prioritize and align responses, taking advantage of the security efforts of MINUSCA to inject development funding and quickly provide evidence of the benefits of stability, namely, employment, infrastructure and social services. The approach of the World Bank to working in fragile States such as the Central African Republic is a good example of such partnership with the United Nations.

79. I welcome the progress achieved towards the restoration of security and State authority in Bambari. The relative absence of armed groups in the town may be a source of cautious optimism, but we must not allow the town to be isolated in a sea of turmoil. This is why I urge the Government to prioritize the lasting redeployment of capable and accountable State authority, basic services and security in order to rebuild trust with the local population. The United Nations system in the country, together with its partners, will continue to support these efforts through an innovative whole-of-system approach. This will be buttressed by the continued readiness of MINUSCA to act decisively to ensure the protection of the people of Bambari.

80. The steps taken to develop a strategic framework on security sector reform are encouraging. While the adoption of key security sector reform documents signals the formal commitment of national authorities to establish professional, ethnically representative and regionally balanced national defence and security forces, I urge the Government to translate this vision into tangible actions. The launch of the recruitment of 500 new gendarmerie and police officers is a welcome development in this regard. I call on the Government to ensure that the composition of these new recruits is geographically representative and gender-balanced. I also welcome the progress in the training of the Central African armed forces by the European Union Training Mission, even although concerns remain that the lack of coherent operational and logistical support arrangements will hamper any future deployment. I urge the Government to allocate sufficient funding in its budget to sustain its security forces and call upon international partners to provide additional funding, equipment and logistical support.

81. I am encouraged to see steady progress towards the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, which is expected to have jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. I call upon the national authorities to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Special Prosecutor can immediately start investigations. I commend the mapping of serious violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights law, which will inform transitional justice mechanisms, as well as the work of the Special Prosecutor.

82. I am outraged by the continued attacks on peacekeepers and aid workers, both international and national. I strongly condemn the cowardly attack that killed 5 peacekeepers and wounded 10, making this the single deadliest attack against MINUSCA. The loss of a sixth peacekeeper in the subsequent attack on Bangassou is reprehensible. These attacks constitute serious crimes under international law, and I call for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

83. I am deeply concerned about the impact that the security situation is having on the humanitarian situation, which is further compounded by the persistent gap between humanitarian needs and resources. We need to stem the flow of humanitarian actors leaving the country because of lack of funding and insecurity. The continued attacks against aid workers who are helping the destitute must stop. I urge the international community to urgently contribute to the Humanitarian Response Plan to avoid a further deterioration of the situation.

84. I express my sincere gratitude to my Special Representative, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his unflinching dedication to consolidating peace in the country. I pay tribute to the women and men of MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their dedication to the cause of peace in a highly demanding and challenging environment. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, for his role in the subregion in support of the Central African Republic. I thank the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the European Union, the World Bank, international partners and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to contribute to peace and security in the Central African Republic.